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SKETCHES

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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SKETCHES

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE;

WITH

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

SPIRIT OF THE TIMES,

MEN, AND REVOLUTIONS.

BY

THE VISCOUNT DE CHATEAUBRIAND.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THIS View of English Literature, which is to precede my translation of Milton, consists of

1. Some detached pieces of my early studies, corrected in style, rectified with regard to opinions, enlarged or condensed, as relates to the text.

2. Various extracts from my Memoirs ; extracts which happened to be connected directly, or indirectly with the work which I here submit to the public.

3. Recent researches relative to the subject of these volumes.

I have visited the United States ; I have lived eight years an exile in England ; after residing in London as an emigrant, I have returned thither as ambassador. I believe that I am as thoroughly acquainted with English as a man can be with a language foreign to his own.

I have read most conscientiously all that it

was my duty to read on the subject discussed in these two volumes. I have rarely quoted my authorities, because they are known to men of letters, and men of the world care nothing about them. What do they want to know about Warton, Evans, Jones, Percy, Owen, Ellis, Leyden, Edward Williams, Tyrwhit, Roquefort, Tressan, the collections of the historians and poets, manuscripts, &c.? I will nevertheless mention here one French work, precisely because the journals seem to have neglected it too much. Long articles are occupied with frivolous publications, but scarcely twenty lines are bestowed on instructive and serious books.

The *Essais historiques sur les Bardes, les Jongleurs, etc*, by the Abbé de la Rue, is a work that deserves to fix the attention of every friend of sound criticism, of an erudition acquired at the source, and not composed of scraps stolen from some forgotten investigator. One of my honourable and learned colleagues of the French Academy does not always, it is true, agree with the historian of the bards : M. de la Rue is *Trouvère*, and M. Raynouard, *Troubadour ;* it is the old quarrel of the language of Oc and the language of Oil.*

* At the moment of writing this commendation of the Abbé de la Rue, of whom I know nothing but his works, I have re-

The *Idée de la Poésie anglaise*, (1749) by the Abbé Yart, and the *Poétique anglaise* (1806) by M. Hennel, may be consulted with advantage. M. Hennel is thoroughly acquainted with the language of which he treats. Besides, several collections are announced; and to the genuine lovers of English literature the *Bibliothèque anglo-française*, by M. O'Sullivan, will leave nothing to wish for.

In this Review of English Literature I have treated at considerable length of Milton, because it was written expressly on account of the Paradise Lost. I analyse his different works, I show that revolutions have approximated Milton to us; that he is become a man of our times, that he was as great a writer in prose as in verse; prose conferred celebrity on him during his life, poetry after his death; but the renown of the prose writer is lost in the glory of the poet.

I ought to premise that in this Historical View I have not stuck close to my subject: I have treated of every thing – the present, the past, the future; I digress hither and thither. When I meet with the middle ages, I talk of them;

ceived intelligence of the death of this friend of Sir Walter Scott's.

when I run foul of the reformation, I dwell upon it; when I come to the English revolution, it reminds me of our own, and I advert to the actors and the events of the latter. If an English royalist is thrown into jail, I think of the cell which I occupied at the prefecture of police. The English poets lead me to the French poets; Lord Byron brings to my recollection my exile in England, my walks to Harrow Hill, and my travels to Venice—and so of the rest. The book is composed of miscellanies which have all tones, because they relate to all things: they pass from literary criticism, lofty or familiar, to historical observations, narratives, portraits, and recollections, general or personal. That I may not take any one by surprise, that the reader may know from the first what he has to expect, that he may be aware that English Literature here forms but the ground of my medley, the canvas for my embroidery, I have given a second title to this work.

HISTORICAL VIEW

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

HISTORICAL VIEW

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

INTRODUCTION.

OF THE LATIN AS THE SOURCE OF THE LANGUAGES OF LATIN EUROPE.

When a powerful people has passed away; when the language which it used has ceased to be spoken; that language remains a monument of another age, in which we admire the master-pieces of a broken pencil and chisel. To tell how the idioms of the tribes of Ausonia became the Latin idiom; how much of the character of the barbarous tribes who formed it was retained by that idiom; what it lost and

gained by the conversion of a free government into a despotic government, and still later by the revolution effected in the religion of the State; to tell how the conquered and conquering nations introduced a number of foreign expressions into this idiom; how the wrecks of this idiom formed the base upon which arose the dialects of the west and south of modern Europe—would be the subject of an immense philological work.

Nothing indeed could be more curious and more instructive than to take up the Latin at its commencement, and to follow it to its end, through the different ages and changes. The materials for such a work are ready prepared in the seven treatises of John Nicolas Funck: De Origine Linguæ Latinæ Tractatus—De Pueritiâ Latinæ Linguæ Tractatus—De Adolescentiâ Latinæ Linguæ Tractatus—De virili Ætate Latinæ Linguæ Tractatus—De imminenti Latinæ Linguæ Senectute Tractatus—De vegetâ Latinæ Linguæ Senectute Tractatus—De inerti et decrepita Latinæ Linguæ Senectute Tractatus.

The Doric Greek language, and the Etruscan and the Oscian language of the hymns of the Salii and of the Law of the Twelve Tables,

the articles of which, in verse, were still sung by children in the time of Cicero, produced the rude language of Duillius, Cæcilius and Ennius, the lively language of Plautus, the satirical of Lucilius, the græcised of Terence, the philosophic, dull, slow and spondaic of Lucretius, the eloquent of Cicero and Livy, the clear and correct of Cæsar, the elegant of Horace, the brilliant of Ovid, the poetic and concise of Catullus, the harmonious of Tibullus, the divine of Virgil, the pure and chaste of Phædrus.

This language of the age of Augustus—I know not at what date to place Quintus Curtius—became as it degenerated, the energetic language of Tacitus, Lucian, Seneca, Martial; the copious language of Pliny the elder; the flowery language of the younger Pliny; the saucy language of Suetonius, the violent of Juvenal, the obscure of Persius, the inflated or flat of Statius and Silius Italicus.

After it had passed through the grammarians, Quintilian and Macrobius; through the epitomists, Florus, Velleius Paterculus, Justin, Orosus, Sulpitius Severus; through the fathers of the Church and the ecclesiastical writers, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrosius, Hilary

of Poitiers, Paulinus, Augustin, Jerome, Salvienus; through the apologists, Lactantius, Arnobius, Minutius Felix; through the panegyrists, Eumenes, Mamertinus, Nazairius; through the historians of the decline, Ammianus Marcellinus and the biographers of the *august history*; through the poets of the decline and fall, Ausonius, Claudian, Rutilius, Sidonius Apollinaris, Prudentius, Fortunatus; after it had received from the change of religions, from the transformation of manners, from the invasion of the Goths, the Alans, the Huns, the Arabs, &c. accessions rendered absolutely necessary by new wants and new ideas—this language turned to another barbarism in the first historian of those Franks who began a new language after they had destroyed the Roman empire among our ancestors.

Authors have themselves noted the successive alterations of the Latin from age to age. Cicero asserts that in Gaul many words not admitted in Rome—*verba non trita Romæ*—were employed; Martial uses Celtic expressions and boasts of so doing; St. Jerome says that, in his time, the Latin language was changing in every country—*regionibus mutatur*; Festus, in the fifth century, complains of the

general ignorance that already prevailed relative to the construction of the Latin; St. Gregory the Great declares that he cares little about solecisms and barbarisms; Gregory of Tours claims the indulgence of the reader for having in style and words transgressed the rules of grammar, with which he was not well acquainted—*non sum imbutus*; the oaths of Charles the Bald and Louis the German show us the Latin just expiring; the religious writers of the seventh century praise those bishops who can speak the Latin with purity; and the councils of the ninth century enjoin the bishops to preach in the *rustic Roman* language.

It was therefore from the seventh to the ninth century, between those two precise periods, that the Latin was metamorphosed into Roman of different shades and different accents, according to the provinces in which it was spoken. The correct Latin, which reappears in the historians and writers commencing with the reign of Charlemagne, is no longer the *spoken* Latin but the *learnt* Latin. The word Latin soon signified nothing more than the *Roman* or *Romance language*, and was afterwards used to express language

in general: "*les oiseaux chantent en leur* LATIN."

This civilized language, the offspring of a barbarous language, differs in its elements from a barbarous language emanating from a civilized language. The first must be more original, because it has been created by itself, and has merely developed its germ; the second—the barbarous language, grafted upon a civilized language, loses its natural sap, and bears foreign fruit.

Such is the Latin with reference to the barbarous idiom which gave birth to it; such are the modern languages of Latin Europe with reference to the polished language from which they are derived. A living language springing from a living language continues its life; a living language formed from a dead language is in some degree affected by the death of its mother; it retains a number of words which are also dead, and which no longer convey the perceptions of existence, any more than silence expresses sound.

Was there, towards the conclusion of the life of the Latin language, an idiom of transition between it and the modern dialects, an idiom in general use on this side of the

Alps and of the Rhine? Was the *rustic Roman* language, so frequently mentioned in the councils of the ninth century, that *Roman*, that *Provençal*, language spoken in the south of France? Was the Provençal the *Catalan*, and was it formed at the court of the Counts of Barcelona? Did the *Roman* of the north of the Loire, the Walloon *Roman*, or the *Roman of the Trouvères*, which became the French, precede the *Roman* of the south of the Loire or the *Roman of the Troubadours?* Did the language of Oc and the language of Oil borrow the subjects of their songs and their stories from *Armorican lays* and from *Gaelic lays?* Here is matter for a controversy that may last till the moment when the learned work of M. Fauriel shall throw light on this obscure subject.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,

DIVIDED INTO FIVE EPOCHS.

AMONG the languages formed from the Latin, I reckon the English language, though it has a double origin, but I shall show that, from the Norman conquest till the reign of the first Tudor, the Franco-Roman language predominated, and that, in the modern English language, an immense quantity of Latin and French words have remained incorporated with the new idiom.

The *rustic Roman* language was divided then into two branches: the language of Oc and the language of Oil. When the Normans had possessed themselves of the province to which they have left their name, they learned the language of Oil; it was spoken at Rouen, but Danish was used at

Bayeux. William carried the two French idioms into England with the adventurers who joined him from both sides of the Loire.

But, in the preceding ages, whilst the Gauls were forming their language from the ruins of the Latin, Britain, from which the Romans had long withdrawn, and where the nations of the North had successively established themselves, had retained its primitive idioms.

Thus then the history of the English language divides itself into five epochs.

1. The Anglo-Saxon epoch, from 450 to 780. Augustin, the monk, introduced the Roman alphabet into England in 570.

2. The Danish-Saxon epoch, from 780 to the invasion of the Normans. The principal relics of this epoch are the manuscripts called Alfred's and two translations of the four evangelists.

3. The Anglo-Norman epoch, commencing in 1066. The Norman language was no other than the Neustrian, that is, the French language of this side the Loire, or the language of Oil. In order to preserve the memory of their songs, the Normans employed characters, called *runstabath*: these are the Runic letters, and to them were joined those which Ethicus had previously in-

vented and for which St. Jerome had furnished the signs.

4. The Norman-French epoch. When Eleonore of Guienne had brought to Henry II. the western provinces of France from the Lower Loire to the Pyrenees, and princesses of the blood of St. Louis had successively married English monarchs, states, possessions, families, customs, manners, were so blended, that French became the ordinary language of the nobility, the ecclesiastics, the scholars, and the traders of the two kingdoms. In the Domesday book, a topographical survey and register of landed property, drawn up by command of William the Conqueror, the names of places are written in Latin, according to the French pronunciation. Thus a multitude of Latin words became incorporated directly with the English language, by religion and by its ministers, whose language was Latin, and indirectly through the medium of Norman and French words. The Norman of William the Bastard retained also the Scandinavian or Germanic expressions, which the children of Rollo had introduced into the idiom of the Frankish country conquered by them.

5. The epoch properly called English, when English was written and spoken as it exists at present.

These five epochs will be treated of separately, in the five parts into which this work is divided.

These five parts naturally range themselves under these heads:

1. Literature during the time of the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes, and the middle ages.

2. Literature under the Tudors.

3. Literature under the first two Stuarts, and during the Commonwealth.

4. Literature under the last two Stuarts.

5. Literature under the House of Hanover.

When we study the literature of different countries, a great number of allusions and traits escape us, if we do not bear in mind the manners and customs of the respective nations. A view of literature, apart from the history of nations, would create a prodigious fallacy: to hear the successive poets calmly singing their loves and their sheep, you would figure to yourself the uninterrupted existence of the golden age on the earth. And yet, in that same England of which we are treating, these strains resounded amid

the invasion of the Romans, the Picts, the Saxons, the Danes; amid the conquest of the Normans, the insurrections of the Barons, the quarrels of the first Plantagenets for the crown, the civil wars of the Red and White Rose, the ravages of the Reformation, the executions commanded by Henry VIII., and the burnings ordered by Mary, amid the massacres and slavery of Ireland, the desolations of Scotland, the scaffolds of Charles I. and Sidney, the flight of James, the proscription of the Pretender and the Jacobites—the whole intermingled with parliamentary storms, court crimes, and a thousand foreign wars.

Social order, separated from political order, is composed of religion, intelligence, and material industry. In every nation, even at the moment of the direst catastrophes and of the greatest events, there will always be a priest who prays, a poet who sings, an author who writes, a philosopher who meditates, a painter, a sculptor, an architect, who paints, chisels, builds, and a workman who labours. These men, surrounded by revolutions, seem to lead a life apart: if you look at them only, you see a real, a genuine, an immutable world, the base of the human edifice, but which

appears fictitious and foreign to the society of convention, the political society. The priest, indeed, in his hymns, the poet, the philosopher, the artist, in their compositions, the artisan in his work, mark occasionally the time in which they live, and the recoil of the events which wrung from them in more abundance their sweat, their complaints, and the productions of their genius.

To destroy this illusion of two views presented separately; to avoid creating that fallacy to which I have alluded, in the course of this chapter; and that I may not suddenly throw the reader unprepared into the history of the poetry, works, and authors of the first stages of English literature, I think it right to introduce here a general picture of the middle ages. These preliminary matters will facilitate the understanding of the subject.

THE MIDDLE AGES.

LAWS AND BUILDINGS.

THE middle ages present a grotesque picture, which seems to be the production of a strong but wild imagination. In antiquity, each nation springs, if we may so express ourselves, from its own stock; a primitive spirit, insinuating itself every where and showing its influence in everything, renders manners and institutions homogeneous. The society of the middle ages was composed of the wrecks of a thousand other societies: Roman civilization, nay paganism itself, had left their vestiges in it; from the christian religion it received its faith and its solemnities; the Gothic, Burgundian, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, Norman barbarians retained the customs and character peculiar to their respective races. All kinds of property were intermingled; all kinds of laws were blended, the allodial, the fief, the mortmain, the code, the digest, the

salic, the gombrette, the visigoth law, the common law; all the forms of liberty and servitude jostled one another; the monarchical liberty of the king, the aristocratic liberty of the noble, the individual liberty of the priest, the collective liberty of parishes, the privileged liberty of towns, of the magistracy, of the guilds and artizans and traders, the representative liberty of the nation, Roman slavery, barbarous villenage, the servitude of the *aubaine*. Hence those incoherent spectacles, those usages, which appear contradictory to each other, and which are held together solely by the bond of religion. You would almost take them to be different nations, wholly unconnected with one another, but who have merely agreed to live under one common master and around the same altar.

Even in its external appearance, Europe then presented a much more picturesque and national aspect than it at present exhibits. For buildings, the offspring of our religion and our manners, we have substituted, from affectation of the bastard Roman architecture, such as are neither in harmony with our climate nor appropriate to our wants. The cold and servile spirit of copyism has introduced falsehood into our arts, as the ground-work of Latin literature has destroyed in

our literature the originality of the Frankish genius. It was not thus that the middle ages imitated; the minds of those times also admired the Greeks and the Romans; they sought after and studied their works, but, instead of suffering themselves to be mastered by, they mastered, them, moulding them to their will, rendering them French, and heightening their beauty by this metamorphosis, full of creative vigour and independence.

The first christian churches in the West were only temples reversed; the pagan worship was external, the decoration of the temple was external; the christian worship was internal, the decoration of the church was internal. The pillars were transferred from the outside to the inside of the edifice, as in the churches in which the believers held their meetings when they issued from the crypts and catacombs. The proportions of the church surpassed in dimensions those of the temple, because the christian congregation met beneath the roof of the church, whereas the pagan multitude collected under the peristyle of the temple. But when the christians became masters, they changed this arrangement, and adorned their buildings also on the side towards the landscape and the sky.

And, in order that the supports of the aërial nave might not be inappropriate to the structure, the chisel had cut them out; nothing was to be seen but flying buttresses, pyramids, pinnacles, and statues.

The ornaments which were not essential parts of the edifice were adapted to its style; the tombs were of Gothic fashion, and the church, which covered them like an immense canopy, seemed to be moulded upon their form. The arts of design shared in this flowery and composite taste: on the walls and on the windows were painted landscapes, scripture subjects, and scenes of national history.

In the castles of the great, coloured armorial bearings, inclosed in lozenges of gold, formed ceilings resembling those of the beautiful palaces of the *cinque cento* in Italy. Writing itself was drawn, the German hieroglyphic substituted for the rectilinear Roman letters, harmonized with the sepulchral stones. The detached towers which served for lookouts on the heights; the castles embosomed in woods or perched on the tops of rocks, like the eyries of vultures; the pointed and narrow bridges thrown boldly across torrents; the fortified towns which you came to at every step, and the battlements of which

were at once ramparts and ornaments ; the chapels, the oratories, the hermitages, placed in the most picturesque spots beside roads and rivers; the towers, the steeples of country churches, the abbeys, the monasteries, the cathedrals, all those edifices of which but a small number now exists, and whose fretwork time has blackened, filled up, or broken, had then the freshness of youth; they had just issued from the hands of the workman. In the whiteness of their stones the eye lost none of the lightness of their details, of the elegance of their towers, of the variety of their wavings, their carvings, their chisellings, their pinkings, and all the whims of a free and inexhaustible imagination.

" In the short space of eighteen years, from 1136 to 1154, not fewer than eleven hundred and fifteen castles were built in England alone.

" Christianity raised at the general expence, by means of collections and alms, the cathedrals for the erection of which each state was not wealthy enough to pay separately, and scarcely any of which is finished. In those vast and mysterious edifices were engraved in relief and hollowed out as with a nipping tool, the decorations of the altar, the sacred monograms, the vestures and articles used by the priests. The banners, the

crosses of various composition, the cups, the shrines, the canopies, the copes, the cowls, the crosiers, the mitres, whose forms are met with in the Gothic, preserved the symbols of the worship at the same time that they produced unexpected effects of art. The gutters and spouts were very often carved into the faces of hideous demons or vomiting mouths. This architecture of the middle ages exhibited a medley of the tragic and the grotesque, of the gigantic and the graceful, like the poems and romances of the same period.

The plants of our soil, the trees of our woods, the trefoil and the oak, also decorated our churches, in like manner as the acanthus and the palm had embellished the temples of the country and the age of Pericles. Within a cathedral was a forest, a labyrinth, whose thousands of arches, at every motion of the spectator, crossed each other, separated, and entwined again. This forest was lighted by circular windows of painted glass, which resembled suns shining with a thousand colours beneath the foliage; externally the same cathedral looked, with its flying buttresses and its pinnacles, like an edifice from which the scaffolding had not been removed.

MIDDLE AGES.

DRESS—ENTERTAINMENTS AND DIVERSIONS.

The population moving around the edifices is described in chronicles and represented in vignettes. The different classes of society and the inhabitants of different provinces were distinguished, some by the form of their garments, others by local fashions. The people had not that uniform aspect, which the same mode of dress gives at the present day to the inhabitants of our towns and to those of the country. The nobles, the knights, the magistrates, the bishops, the secular clergy, the religious of all the orders, the pilgrims, the penitents, gray, black, and white, the hermits, the fraternities, the guilds, the citizens, the peasants, exhibited an infinite variety of costumes. We still see something of the sort in Italy. On this point we must appeal to the arts. What can the painter make of our

tight garments, our round hats, or our cocked hats?

From the twelfth to the fourteenth century, the peasant and people of the lower class wore a gray jacket, girt round the waist by a belt. The body coat of leather, the *pelicon*, the origin of the surplice, was common to all ranks. The furred pelisse and the long oriental robe enwrapped the knight when he had laid aside his armour; the sleeves of this robe covered his hands; it resembled the Turkish caftan of the present day; the cap adorned with feathers, or bonnet, served instead of turban. The ample robe was succeeded by a close dress, and that again by a loose robe. The breeches, so short and tight as to be indecent, came down no lower than the middle of the thigh; the hose or stockings were dissimilar; one leg was of one colour and one of another. The same was the case with the surcoat, part black and part white, and with the bonnet, which was blue and red. "And their garments were so tight to put on and to pull off, that it seemed as if they were being flayed. Others had their robes tucked up about their loins like women, and they had their bonnets prettily pinked all round. And they had their hose one of one coloured cloth and one of another. And

their sleeves and their lappets hung down almost to the ground; so that they looked more like merry-andrews than like other people. Certes, it was no marvel then if the Almighty thought fit to punish the French for their misdeeds with his scourge," (the plague).

Over the robe was worn on days of ceremony a mantle, sometimes short, at others long. The mantle of Richard I. was made of striped stuff, sprinkled with globes and half moons of silver, in imitation of the celestial system (Winesalf). Hanging collars served as ornaments alike for both sexes.

The pointed and stuffed shoes called *pouleyns*, or *poulains*, were long in fashion. The maker cut out the upper leather like the windows of a church. They were two feet long for the noble, decorated at the extremity with horns, claws, or grotesque figures. They were of such length that it was impossible to walk in them without fastening the points, which crooked upwards, to the knees with chains of gold or silver. The bishops excommunicated the poulains, and treated them as a *sin against nature*. They were declared to be "contrary to good morals, and invented in derision of the Creator." In England, an act of parliament forbade the making of any shoes or

buskins " with poleyns exceeding the length of two inches." The pointed shoes were succeeded by wide square-toed slippers. The fashions of that time varied as much as those of our days. The knight or the lady who invented a new fashion became a celebrated person. The inventor of poleyns was the English knight Robert le Cornu. (W. Malmesbury.)

The gentlewomen wore very fine linen next to the skin. They were dressed in high tunics covering the bosom, embroidered on the right breast with the arms of their husband, on the left with those of their family. Sometimes they wore their hair combed down smooth upon the forehead, and covered with a small cap interlaced with ribands; at others they allowed the hair to float loosely over their shoulders; at others again they built it up into a pyramid three feet high, suspending to it either wimples, or long veils, or stripes of silk, descending to the ground and fluttering in the wind. At the time of Queen Isabeau, it was found necessary to enlarge the doorways both in height and breadth, in order to afford a passage for the ladies' head-dresses. These head-dresses were supported by two curved horns, the frame-work of this structure. From the top of the horn on

the right side hung a piece of light stuff, which the wearer suffered to float, or which she drew over her bosom like a wimple, by twisting it round the left arm. A lady in full dress displayed collars, bracelets, and rings. To her girdle, enriched with gold, pearls, and precious stones, was fastened an embroidered pouch: she galloped on a palfrey, carrying a bird on her fist, or a cane in her hand. "What can be more ridiculous," says Petrarch, in a letter addressed to the Pope in 1366, "than to see men girthed round the body. Below, long peaked shoes; above, caps laden with feathers: hair tressed, moving this way and that, behind them, like the tail of an animal, and turned up on the forehead with ivory-headed pins!" Pierre of Blois adds that it was the fashion to talk mincingly. And what language was so spoken?—the language of Robert Wace and the Roman du Rou, of Ville-Hardouin, Joinville, and Froissart!

The luxury in dress and entertainments exceeded all belief: we are but paltry personages in comparison with those barbarians of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Then were seen at a tournament a thousand knights attired in a uniform robe of silk, called *cointise*, and on

the morrow they appeared in new vestments equally magnificent. (Matthew Paris). One of the dresses of Richard II., King of England, cost thirty thousand marks of silver. (Knighton). Sir John Arundel had no fewer than fifty-two complete suits of apparel for his own person, of cloth of gold or of tissue. (Holinshed's Chron.)

At another tournament, sixty superb horses richly caparisoned, each led by an esquire, first filed off one by one, preceded by trumpeters and minstrels; then came sixty young ladies mounted on palfreys, magnificently attired, each leading by a silver chain a knight armed at all points. Dancing and music formed part of these *bandors* (festivities). The King, the prelates, the knights, danced to the sound of viols, bagpipes, and *chiffonies*.

At Christmas there were grand masquerades. In England, in 1348, there were prepared eighty tunics of buckram, forty-two masks, and a great number of grotesque dresses, for the masquerades. In 1377, a masquerade, composed of about one hundred and thirty persons disguised in different ways, afforded diversion to the Prince of Wales.

Ball, the mall, quoits, skittles, dice, were amusements in which all took a part. There is

still extant a note of Edward the Second's for the sum of five shillings, which sum he had borrowed from his barber to play at cross or pile.

MIDDLE AGES.

REPASTS.

Among the nobles, dinner was announced by the sound of the horn: this was called in France *corner l'eau*, because the company washed their hands before they sat down to table. The usual dinner hour was nine in the morning, and that for supper five in the evening. They sat on banks or benches, sometimes high, at others low, and the table was raised or lowered in proportion. From the bank or bench is derived the word banquet. There were tables of gold and silver chased: the wooden tables were covered with double cloths, called *doubliers;* they were laid to resemble the surface of a river which a breeze has ruffled into little waves.

Napkins are of more modern date. Forks, with which the Romans were unacquainted, were also unknown to the French till the end of the fourteenth century: we meet with them for the first time under Charles V.

Our ancestors, in those days, ate nearly every thing that we do now; nay, their cookery possessed refinements to which we at this day are utter strangers: Roman civilization had not perished in the kitchen. Among the dishes in the highest request, I find mention made of *dellegrous*, *maupigyrum*, and *karumpie*. What were these? There was served up pastry of obscene forms, which were called by their proper names: ecclesiastics, matrons, and young ladies, rendered these grossnesses innocent by a modest ingenuity. Language was then stark naked. The translations of the Bible in those days were quite as crude and more indecent than the text. The *Instruction du Chevalier Geoffroy la Tour Landry, gentilhomme angevin, à ses filles* will furnish a specimen of the freedom then taken in language and instruction.

Beer, cider, and wine of all sorts, were consumed in abundance. Mention is made of cider under the second race of kings. *Clairet* was clarified wine to which spices were

added; hypocras, wine sweetened with honey. In 1310 an English abbot entertained six thousand guests, before whom were set three thousand dishes. At the wedding feast of the Earl of Cornwall, in 1243, thirty thousand dishes were served up; and, in 1251, sixty fat oxen were furnished by the Archbishop of York alone, for the marriage of Margaret of England with Alexander III., King of Scotland. The royal repasts were enlivened by *intermezzi*: all sorts of music were performed; the clercs sang songs, roundelays, and virelays. "When the king (Henry II. of England) goes abroad in the morning," says Pierre of Blois, "you see a multitude of people, running hither and thither, as if they had lost their wits: horses dash one against the other; carriages upset carriages; players, public women, gamesters, cooks, confectioners, singers, barbers, dancers, boon companions, parasites, make a horrible noise: in short, the confusion of foot and horse is so hideous that you would imagine the abyss had opened and hell vomited forth all its devils."

When Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, travelled, he had two hundred horsemen in his train,* consisting of knights, esquires, pages, clergymen, and officers of his household.

This cavalcade was followed by eight carriages, each drawn by five strong horses: two of these carriages contained beer, one conveyed the furniture of his chapel, another that of his chamber, and another that of his kitchen; the last three were filled with provisions, apparel, and various other articles. He had, besides, twelve horses laden with coffers, containing his money, gold plate, books, clothes, and the ornaments for the altar. Each carriage was guarded by a very large bull-dog, having a monkey on his back. (Salisb.)

It was found necessary to enact sumptuary laws for the table. These laws allowed the rich only two courses and two sorts of meat, with the exception of prelates and barons, who were at liberty to eat what they pleased. They limited traders and artizans to the use of meat at one meal only; for all the other meals they were obliged to content themselves with milk, butter, and vegetables.

MIDDLE AGES.

MANNERS

Upon the roads the traveller met with litters, mules, palfreys, and carriages drawn by oxen, with wheels in the antique fashion. The roads were of two kinds, turnpike-roads and by-roads. Their width was regulated by law. The turnpike-road was required to be fourteen feet broad. The by-road might be shaded with trees, but no trees excepting such as were capable of affording shelter were permitted to border the royal roads. It was the vassals of the feudal lords who cut the infinite multitude of cross-roads by which the country is intersected.

These were the times of the marvellous in

every thing. The almoner, the monk, the pilgrim, the knight, the troubadour, had always adventures to tell or to sing of. In the evening, seated on the benches in the chimney-corner, they listened to the romance of King Arthur, of Ogier the Dane, of Lancelot of the Lake, or the story of the goblin Orthon, a great newsmonger, who came in the wind and was killed in a large black sow. (Froissart.)

Among these tales was to be heard also the *sirvante* of the *jongleur* against a felon knight, or a narrative of the life of a pious personage. These lives of saints, collected by the Bollandists, displayed an imagination not less brilliant than the profane stories; incantations of conjurors, tricks of swindlers and idlers, chases of were-wolves, redemption of slaves, attacks of robbers, travellers saved, and who marry the daughters of their hosts on account of their beauty (St. Maximus); lights which at night reveal the grave of some virgin amidst the bushes; castles which appear suddenly illumined (St. Viventius, Maura and Brista).

St. Deicole, having lost his way, met with a shepherd and begged he would tell him where

he might find a lodging. " I know of none," said the shepherd, " unless it be in a place watered by springs in the lands of the powerful vassal Weissart." — " Canst thou show me the way to it?" asked the saint. " I cannot leave my flock," replied the shepherd. Deicole thrust his staff into the ground, and the shepherd on his return from showing the saint the way, found his sheep lying quietly around the miraculous staff. Weissart, the cruel castellan, threatens vengeance against Deicole; but his wife Berthilde has a great veneration for the minister of God. Deicole enters the castle; the serfs eagerly come forward to help him off with his cloak: he declines their aid, and hangs it up on one of the sun's rays, which entered through the loop-hole of a tower. (Boll. t. II, p. 202.)

Giraldus, a native of Wales, relates in his Topography of Ireland, that, St. Kewen being at prayer with outstretched hands, a swallow entered at the window of his cell, and laid an egg in one of his hands. The saint did not drop his hand, nor did he close it, till the swallow had laid all her eggs and hatched her brood. In memory of this act of kindness and patience,

the statue of the hermit in Ireland is holding a swallow in one hand.

The Abbot Turketull had in his possession one of St. Bartholomew's thumbs, and he used it to sign himself in times of danger from storms and lightning.

The barbarians were fond of hermits. They were soldiers of different classes, equally tried, equally hardy, with themselves, sleeping on the ground, dwelling upon the rock, delighting in distant pilgrimages, in the vastness of deserts and forests. Thus hermits conducted battles: encamping at night in cemeteries, they there composed and sang to the armed multitude the *Dies iræ* and the *Stabat mater*. The Anglo-Saxons beheld no fewer than ten kings and eleven queens forsake the world and retire into convents. We must beware, however, of suffering ourselves to be misled by words: these queens were wives of pirate Northmen, arriving in barks, keeping their wedding in chariots, like the daughters of Clodion the Hairy, fair and beautiful Norwegian women, who had given up the gods of the Edda for the God of the Gospel, and the Walkiries for angels.

MIDDLE AGES.

MANNERS CONTINUED.

VIGOUR AND END OF THE BARBAROUS AGES.

To endeavour to sketch methodically a picture of the manners of those times would be at once to attempt an impossibility and to belie the confusion of those manners. On the contrary, all those scenes must be thrown pell-mell, just as they followed each other, without order, or were entangled in one common action, at one and the same moment. There was no unity, but in the general impulsion which carried society onward to improvement, by the natural law of human existence.

On the one hand chivalry, on the other the insurrection of the rustic population, all sorts

of licentiousness in the clergy, together with all the ardour of religion. Itinerant monks, travelling on foot or riding on sorry mules, preached against all these scandals, and were burned alive for their pains by the priests, whom they reproached for their dissolute lives, and drowned by the princes whose tyranny they attacked. Gentlemen, lying in wait near the high roads, robbed travellers, whilst other gentlemen became in Spain, in Greece, in Dalmatia, lords of renowned cities, to whose history they were utter strangers. There were courts of love, in which arguments were held agreeably to all the rules of Scottism, and of which the canons were members; troubadours and minstrels, roving from castle to castle, lashing the men in satires, praising the ladies in ballads; citizens divided into guilds, holding festivals in honour of their patrons, in which the saints of Paradise were mingled with the deities of fable; dramatic representations, *miracles* and *mysteries* in churches; *feasts of fools;* sacrilegious masses; gravy soups eaten upon the altar; the *Ite missa est* responded to by the three brayings of an ass; barons and knights engaging at these mysterious repasts to make war upon nations,

vowing upon a peacock or a heron to fight to the death for their ladye-loves; Jews slaughtered and slaughtering one another, conspiring with lepers to poison the wells and springs; tribunals of all sorts, sentencing, by virtue of all kinds of laws, to all sorts of punishments, accused persons of all classes, from the heretic flayed and burned alive, to adulterers bound together naked and led in public through the crowd; the complaisant judge, substituting an innocent prisoner, instead of the wealthy murderer, condemned to die; to crown the confusion, to complete the contrast, the old society civilized after the manner of the ancients perpetuating itself in the abbeys; the students at the universities reviving the philosophic disputes of Greece; the tumult of the schools of Athens and Alexandria mingling with the din of tournaments, feasts, and tiltings. Lastly, place, above and out of this so agitated society, another principle of action, a tomb the object of all affections, of all regrets, of all hopes, which was incessantly drawing beyond sea sovereigns and subjects, the valiant and the guilty, the former to seek enemies, kingdoms, adventures, the latter to fulfil vows, to atone for crimes, to appease remorse—and you have a picture of the middle ages.

Notwithstanding the ill success of the crusades, the East long continued to be, for the nations of Europe, the country of religion and glory: they turned their eyes incessantly towards that bright sun, towards those palms of Idumea, towards those plains of Rama, where the infidels reposed in the shade of the olive-trees planted by Baldwin, towards those fields of Ascalon which still retained traces of Godfrey of Bouillon, of Couci, of Tancred, of Philip Augustus, of Richard-Cœur-de-Lion, of St. Louis, towards that Jerusalem delivered for a moment, but fallen again into her bondage, and which appeared to them, as to Jeremiah, insulted by the passenger, drowned in tears, deprived of her people, seated in solitude.

Such were those ages of imagination and of vigour, which moved on with all these accompaniments, amidst events the most diversified, amidst heresies, schisms, and wars, feudal, civil, and foreign; those ages doubly favourable to genius, either by the solitude of the cloister, when that was sought, or by a world the most strange and the most varied, when this was preferred to solitude. There was not a spot where some new circumstance was not occurring, for each lordship, lay or ecclesiastic, was a little state,

moving in its own orbit, and having its different phases; at ten leagues' distance, customs were totally dissimilar. This order of things, extremely detrimental to general civilization, imparted an extraordinary impulsion to the individual mind; hence all the great discoveries belonged to those ages. Never did the individual live so much; the sovereign dreamt of the aggrandisement of his dominions, the noble of the conquest of his neighbour's fief, the citizen of the extension of his privileges, the merchant of new channels for his trade. People were not thoroughly acquainted with any thing, they had not penetrated to the bottom of any thing, they believed every thing, they were at the entrance, at the threshold, of all hopes, in like manner as a traveller upon a mountain awaits the return of day-light, when he perceives its harbinger the dawn. They made researches into the past as well as the future; they felt the same joy on discovering an old manuscript and a new world; they proceeded with rapid steps towards unknown destinies, as in youth we have all our lives before us. The infancy of those ages was barbarism, their maturity full of passion and energy, and they have left behind them a rich inheritance to the civilized ages which they bore in their fertile womb.

HISTORICAL VIEW

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

PART THE FIRST.

FIRST AND SECOND EPOCHS

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

LITERATURE AT THE TIME OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS, THE DANES, AND DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS UNDER WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR—THE BRITONS.

TACITUS—ERSE POEMS.

Let us now enter upon the different epochs of the English language and literature. The reader will easily place upon the sketch which I am about to give, the authors and their works, as I make them pass successively before him. It begins with the Anglo-Saxon epoch; but, before we turn to that, let us see whether there are not traces left of the language of the Britons during the domination of the Romans.

Cæsar treats only of the manners of those islanders. Tacitus has preserved some speeches of British chiefs. Passing over the harangue of Caractacus to Claudius, I shall only quote some passages of the speech delivered by Galgacus in the mountains of Caledonia.

" The day of your liberty dawns. Deprived of our land and prevented by the Roman fleet from seeking refuge on the sea, nothing is left to us but arms. In the most remote corner of our deserts, out of sight even of the subjugated country, our eyes have not been shocked by the contact with foreign domination. Placed at the extremities of the earth and of liberty, hitherto the renown of our solitude and its fastnesses has defended us: now the limits of Britain are perceptible. Whatever is unknown is magnificent; but beyond Caledonia there is no nation to seek, nothing but waves and rocks, and the Romans are upon us....

" In the family of slaves, the last comer is the drudge of his companions. We, the latest and consequently the most despised in this universe of ancient servitude, we have nothing to expect but death, for we have neither lands, nor mines, nor ports, where they can keep us to labour. Courage then, ye, who cherish life or

glory! The wives of the Romans have not followed them; their fathers are not there to make them ashamed of flight: they look trembling at this sky, this sea, these forests, which they never before beheld. Cooped up and already conquered, they are delivered into our hands by our gods... Here your chief, here your army—there, tribute, labour, the sufferings of slavery. Eternal misery or revenge await you on this field of battle. March to the fight; think of your ancestors, think of your posterity."

After Tacitus, who has paraphrased a few expressions of Galgacus, preserved by tradition in the Roman camps, an abyss opens. Fifteen centuries pass before we again hear of the genius of the Britons, and then how! Macpherson, transporting Ossian, the Irish bard, to Scotland, disfiguring the true history of Fingal, tacking three or four tatters of old ballads to a fiction, represents to us a poet of Caledonia with as much reality as Tacitus has represented a warrior. Since, after all, we have nothing but Ossian; since the fragments, which might be given as compositions of the bards, belong rather to different kinds of minstrels whom I shall notice presently; I am forced to avail myself of Macpherson's work. But as the poems which

John Smith added to those published by the first editor of the Scottish bard are less known, I shall extract, in preference, a few passages from them.

" Crimoina heard the tale of the tomb, she saw her Dargo brought home as dead. Silent and pale she stood, as the pillar of ice that hangs in the season of cold from the brow of Mora's rock. At length she took the harp and touched it soft in praise of her love. Dargo would rise, but we forbade till the song should cease, for it was sweet as the voice of the wounded swan, when she sings away her soul in death, and feels in her breast the fatal dart of the hunter. Her companions flock mournful around: they assuage her pain with their song, and bid the souls of swans convey her to the airy lake of the clouds. Its place is above the mountains of Morven.

" 'Bend,' she said, 'from your clouds, ye fathers of Dargo; bend and carry him to the place of your rest. And ye, maids of Trenmor's airy land, prepare the bright robe of mist for my love. O Dargo, why have I loved, why was I beloved, so much! Our souls were one, our hearts grew together, and how can I survive when they are now divided?—We were two flowers that grew in the cleft of the rock; and our

dewy heads amidst sun-beams smiled. The flowers were two, but their root was one. The virgins of Cona saw them and turned away their foot. They are comely, they said, but lovely. The deer in his course leaped over them; and the roe forbore to crop them. But the wild boar relentless came, he tore up the one with his deadly tusk. The other bends over it his drooping head, and the beauty of both, like the dry herb before the sun, is decayed.

" 'My sun on Morven now is set and the darkness of death dwells around me in all its smiling beauty. But, ere evening, it is set to rise no more; and leaves me in one cold, eternal night. Alas! my Dargo! why art thou so soon to set? Why is thy late smiling face overcast with so thick a cloud? Why is thy warm heart so soon grown cold, and thy tongue of music grown so mute! Thy hand, which so lately shook the spear in the battle's front, there lies cold and stiff: and thy foot, this morning the foremost in the fatal chace, there lies dead as the earth it trod. From afar, over seas, hills, and dales, have I followed till this day, my love! thy steps. In vain did my father look for my return; in vain did my mother mourn my absence. Their eye was often on the sea; the rocks often heard their cry. But I have

been deaf, O my parents, to your voice; for my thoughts were fixed on Dargo. O that death would repeat on me his stroke! O that the wild boar had also torn Crimoina's breast! Then should I mourn on Morven no more, but joyfully go with my love on his cloud!

"'Last night I slept on the heath by thy side; is there not room, this night, in thy shroud? Yes, beside thee I will lay me down; with thee, this night too, I will sleep, my love, my Dargo!'

"We heard the faltering of her voice; we heard the faint note dying in her hand. We raised Dargo from his place. But it was too late. Crimoina was no more. The harp dropped from her hand. Her soul she breathed out in the song. She fell beside her Dargo."

Every reader may believe what he pleases of the translations from the Caledonian by Tacitus and John Smith. The historians are greater liars than the poets, without excepting Tacitus, who, however, poured his burning words upon tyrants, as quick lime is thrown upon corpses for the purpose of consuming them.

ANGLO-SAXONS AND DANES.

THE Anglo-Saxons, having succeeded the Romans, and the Danes having come in their turn to the partition of Great Britain, it would be almost impossible to take a separate view of literature during the epoch of the Anglo-Saxons and that of the Danes; I shall therefore treat of them together.

The Danes took with them their Scalds: these mingled with the Welsh Bards. In Wales there were three things belonging to a free man that could not be seized for debt—his horse, his sword, and his harp. Whole nations, in their heroic age, are poets: people sang in battle, they sang at entertainments, they sang before death; they dreaded, above all things, dying in their beds, like women. Starcather, not having been fortunate enough to meet with death in fight, put a gold chain round his neck, and

declared that he would give it to the first passenger who would have the charity to rid him of his head. Siward, the Danish earl of Northumberland, ashamed of growing old, and fearing lest he should be carried off by disease, said to his friends: "Put on me my coat of mail; gird my sword by my side; place my helmet on my head, my buckler in my left hand, my gilt battle-axe in my right; that I may fall in the garb of a warrior."

On the field of battle, the sound of hymns, accompanied with the clash of arms, burst forth in so awful a manner that the Danes made their horses deaf lest they should be frightened by it.

Religion was on a level with these poetic manners. Fifteen young women and eighteen young men were one day playing at ball in a churchyard. Robert, the priest, who was reading mass, begged them to retire, but they only laughed at him. The priest prayed to God and St. Magnus to punish the impious crew by obliging them to sing and dance for a whole year. His prayer was granted. One of the party took by the hand his sister who was his partner in the dance; the arm came away from her body, but she lost not a drop of blood and kept dancing on. For the whole year round the dancers felt neither cold nor heat, neither

hunger, thirst, nor weariness; nor did their garments become the worse for wear. The incessant motion of their feet wore down the mould to such a degree that they sank in it to the waist. At the year's end, Bishop Hubert broke the invisible spell which bound the dancers, who immediately fell into a profound sleep, which lasted three days and three nights.

An old woman, named Thorbiorga, a famous sorceress, was summoned to the castle of Earl Torchill, to tell when the plague and the famine which were ravaging his domains should cease. Thorbiorga arrived towards evening; she had on a gown of green cloth buttoned from top to bottom; a collar of glass beads; a black lamb-skin lined with a white cat-skin on her head; calf-skin shoes, the hairy side inward, tied with leathern thongs; gloves of white cat-skin, the hair inside; an *huntandic* girdle from which hung a pouch full of magical scrawls. The sorceress supported her feeble body by means of a staff with copper ferule. She was received with high respect: placed upon an elevated seat, she was treated with goat's milk porridge and the stewed hearts of different animals. The next day, Thorbiorga, after arranging her astrological instruments according to the celestial theme, ordered her young attendant, Godreda,

to sing the magic invocation called *vardlokur*. Godreda obeyed, and sang in a voice so sweet that the household of Earl Torchill was quite transported. In those days most unfortunate would have been the wight who had not been born a poet.

Kings themselves were poets. Alfred the Great, Canute the Great, were the pride of the Walkiries. The Bards and the Scalds were feasted at the tables of princes, who loaded them with presents. "If I were to ask my host for the moon," exclaimed a bard, "he would give it to me." Poets have always shown a fondness for the moon.

Cædmon dreamt in verse, and composed poems in his sleep: what is poetry but dreaming!

"I know," said another bard, "a song that will soften iron; I know a song that will still the storm." These inspired personages were known by their looks: they seemed to be intoxicated: their air and their gestures were designated by a particular term: *skallviengl*—poetic frenzy.

The Saxon Chronicle narrates in verse a victory gained by the Anglo-Saxons over the Danes; and the History of Norway preserves the apotheosis of a pirate of Denmark slain, with

five more pirate chieftains, on the coast of Britain.

" King Ethelstan, the chief of chiefs, who confers collars on the brave, and his brother, the noble Edmond, have fought at Brunan Burgh with the edge of the sword. They have cloven the wall of bucklers; they have vanquished warriors of renown, the race of the Scots and the men of ships.

" Olaf has fled with few of his people, and he has wept upon the seas. The foreigner will not relate this battle, seated by his fire, surrounded by his family; for his kinsmen fell there, and his friends returned not from it. The Kings of the North, in their councils, will lament that their warriors dared to play at the game of slaughter with the sons of Edward.

" King Ethelstan and his brother Edmond returned to the land of Wessex. They leave behind them the raven feeding on carcases, the black raven with pointed beak, and the hoarse-voiced toad, and the eagle hungering for carrion, and the greedy kite, and the dun wolf of the woods.

" Never was such slaughter seen in this island; never were more men slain by the edge

of the sword, since the Saxons and the Angles came from the East across the ocean, and landed in Britain — those noble artisans of war, who conquered the Welsh and subdued the country."

Now for the song in honour of the pirate:—

"I have had a vision: I saw myself at daybreak in the hall of Valhalla, preparing all things for the reception of the men slain in battle.

"I awakened the heroes from their sleep; I told them to rise, to set the benches, to place the drinking cups, as for the coming of a king.

"'Whence comes all this noise?' cries Bragg; 'how is it that so many people are stirring, and that they are moving all the benches?' 'It is because Erik is coming,' replies Odin; 'I expect him. Rise and go to meet him.'

"'But why doth his coming please thee more than that of any other king?'—'It is because he has reddened his sword with gore in many places; it is because his bloody sword has been brandished in many lands.'

"'I salute thee, Erik, brave warrior; enter.

Welcome to this abode! Tell us what kings accompany thee. How many come with thee from the fight?'

"'Five kings are coming,' replies Erik, 'and I am the sixth.'"

I could not do better than borrow this translation from the "History of the Conquest of England by the Normans." Let us benefit by the labours of Mr. A. Thierry, but let us learn from him what they have cost him. Our admiration will increase with our gratitude.

"I had entered with ardour into a series of enquiries quite new for me. How extensive soever might have been the circle of these labours, my complete blindness would not have prevented me from travelling through it. I was resigned as much as a resolute man ought to be: I had made friendship with darkness. But other trials came upon me.

"..... Blind and suffering without hope and almost without cessation, I can bear this testimony, which, coming from me, will not be called in question—that there is in the world something more valuable than material enjoyments, than fortune, than health itself, that is, devotion to science."

Impressive and affecting words for which I do not reproach myself with having digressed from my subject.

I have already said something on this point in my "Historical Studies." The Norman mariners themselves sang their voyages:

"I was born in the high lands of Norway, among people skilled in the management of the bow; but I preferred spreading my sail, the terror of the husbandmen of the coast. I have also sped my bark among rocks, *far from the abodes of men.*"

This Scald of the seas might justly boast thus, since the Danes discovered Winland or America, *far from the abodes of men.*

Angelbert mourned over the battle of Fontenay and the death of Hugh, the bastard son of Charlemagne. Such was the frenzy of poesy that we find verses of all measures even in diplomatic documents of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries. A Teutonic song records a victory gained over the Normans in 881 by Louis, son of Louis the Stammerer. "I knew a king, called the Seigneur Louis, who served God with all his heart, because God rewarded him. . . He grasped his lance and his buckler, quickly mounted his horse, and flew to take vengeance on his enemies." Every body knows that a collection of

the ancient songs of the Germans was made by command of Charlemagne.

Expressions originating in the forests are essentially poetical as far as regards passions and images; they degenerate as they become more polished. The national songs of the barbarians were accompanied by the sound of the fife, the drum, and the bagpipe. The Scythians, at their festivities, twanged the strings of their bows. The guitar was in general use in Gaul, and the harp in the island of the Britons. The disdainful ear of the Greek and the Roman perceived, in the musical entertainments of the Franks and the Britons, nothing but the croak of ravens or inarticulate sounds which had no affinity to the human voice. When the nations of the North had triumphed, they were forced to change their tone, to deem this language harmonious, and to comprehend the commands which the master gave to the slave.

The military rhythms conclude with the song of Roland, the last song of barbarous Europe. "At the battle of Hastings," says the great historical painter whom I have quoted, "a Norman named Taillefer, spurred his horse to the front of the battle, and commenced the song of the exploits, famous throughout all Gaul, of Charle-

magne and Roland. As he sang, he played with his sword, throwing it high into the air, and catching it with his right hand. The Normans repeated these strains, or cried "God help! God help!"

"Taillefer qui mult bien chantoit
Sor un cheval qui tost alout,
Devant le Duc alout chantoit
De Karlemagne et de Rollant
Et d'Olivier et des vassaux
Qui moururent à Roncevaux."

These rhymes are by Wace, but Geoffry Gaimar gives many more particulars concerning Taillefer. It is curious to observe how customs change and are nevertheless perpetuated. The drum-major, who tosses his cane into the air and catches it at the head of his regiment, is a tradition of the military *jongleur*.

There exists another instance, more ancient than even the battle of Hastings, of the provocations of military song. In 1054, William defeated the French at Mortemer in Normandy. One of his servants, climbing a tree, kept crying all the night :

Franceis, Franceis, levez ! levez !
Tenez vos veies ; trop dormez ;
Allez vos amis enterrer
Ki sont occis à Mortemer.

This singular herald-at-arms, thus insulting the vanquished enemy from the top of an oak, exhibits a striking picture of the simple manners of those times.

THIRD AND FOURTH EPOCHS

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

ANGLO-NORMAN AND NORMAN-FRENCH EPOCHS FROM WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, AND FROM HENRY II. TO HENRY VIII.

ANGLO-NORMAN TROUVERES

After the Norman conquest, the middle ages begin, and the aspect of things is changed. England has undergone in its language revolutions unknown to other countries. The Teutonic of the Angles drove back the Gaelic of the Britons into the mountains of Wales; the Danish, Scandinavian, or Gothic, cooped up the Erse among the Scotch highlanders, and adulterated the pure Saxon; the Norman, or the old French, confined the Anglo-Saxon to the conquered English.

Under William and his first successors, people wrote and sung in Latin, Caledonian, Welsh, Anglo-Saxon, the Roman of the trouvères, and

sometimes the Roman of the troubadours. There were poets, bards, jongleurs, minstrels, conteors, fableors, gesteors, harpeors. Poetry assumed all sorts of forms, and gave to its productions all sorts of names : lays, ballads, rotruenges, carols, chansons de gestes, tales, sirventois, satires, fabliaux, jeux-partis, dictiés. So far back as the sixth century, Fortunatus gives the name of lays, *leudi*, to the songs of the barbarians. There were romances of love, romances of chivalry, romances of St. Graal, romances of the Round Table, romances of Charlemagne, romances of Alexander, and sacred poems. In the " Dream of the God of Love," the bridge leading to the palace of the deity is composed of *rotruenges*, stanzas accompanied with the viol ; the planks are made of *dits* and *chansons*, the rafters of *sounds of the harp*, and the piles of *sweet British lays*.

Robert de Courthose Duke of Normandy, eldest son of William the Conqueror, who was confined for twenty-eight years in the castle of Cardiff on the sea shore, learned the language of the Welsh bards. From the windows of his prison, he saw an oak towering above the wood which covered the promontory of Penarth. This oak he thus apostrophised : " Oak, planted in the bosom of the woods, whence thou beholdest the

waves of the Severn battling with the sea; oak, nursed on these heights, where blood has flowed in streams; oak, who hast lived amidst tempests; wo to the man who is not old enough to die!"

Another English prince, Richard Cœur-de-Lion was crowned as a troubadour. He had composed in his mother tongue, the Roman language of the south, a sirvante on his captivity at Worms. Among the poets his contemporaries, Richard is not the son of Eleonore of Guienne, but of the Princess of Antioch, found in the open sea in a vessel entirely of gold, and the rigging of which was made of white silk. This vessel is the great *serpent* of the romancers. When the children of Arabian women were naughty, they threatened them with *King Richard*, and when a skittish horse started, the Saracen rider clapped spurs into him, saying, "Did you imagine it was King Richard?" William Blondel (who must not be confounded with the trouvère Blondel de Nesle) was one of Richard's minstrels: we have not his faithful song, the tradition only of which has been handed down to us.

Nothing was more celebrated than the popular history of the *Marquis au court nez*.

William, an Anglo-Norman trouvère, has left in his poem on the *Joies de Notre Dame* a curious

description of Rome and its monuments in the eleventh century. He composed a very ingenious little poem on these three words—smoke, rain, and woman, which drive a man from his home: that home is heaven; smoke, pride; rain, covetousness; woman, lust; three things which exclude from heaven, the home of man.

A monk of Mont St. Michel in the description which he gives of the diversions of that monastery, (then under English domination) tells us that "below Avranches, towards Bretagne, there was once the forest of Cuokelunde, full of stags, but where now there is nothing but fish. In the forest there had been a monument." The poet places the irruption of the sea during the reign of Childebert.

Geoffrey Gaimar, author of the history of the kings of the Anglo-Saxons, borrowed from the Welsh bards the Brut of England, which Wace translated from the Latin of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The latter, according to the Abbé de la Rue, had translated his version from the Low Breton original, carried to England by Walter Galenius, archdeacon of Oxford.

Brut or Brutus is a great grandson of Æneas, first king of the Britons. From King Brut was descended Arthur or Artus, King of Armorica, whose return we French Bretons expect, as the

Jews do the coming of the Messiah. Arthur instituted the order of Knights of the Round Table. All the knights of this order have their history; hence it is that the first story has what the minstrels term *branches*, as in Ariosto one story begets another. Arthur and his knights are sketched after Charlemagne and his chevaliers. Is it not inconceivable how people can still seek the origin of these marvels in the false Turpin, who wrote in 1095, without perceiving that it exists in the history of the *Faits et Gestes de Karle-le-Grand*, compiled in 884 by the monk of St. Gall?

"The *Roman du Rou* is likewise by Robert Wace. Here is to be found the authentic history of the fairies of my country, of the forest of Bréchéliant, full of tigers and lions: the *wild man* reigns there, and King Arthur strives to pierce him with his great sword, *Escalibar*. In this forest of Bréchéliant murmurs the fountain of Barenton. A golden bowl is fastened to the aged oak whose boughs overhang the fountain: to raise a storm, you need only take up some water in the bowl and spill a few drops of it. Robert Wace had the curiosity to visit the forest, but could discover none of these things:—

Fol m'en revins, fol y allai.

A charm improperly used caused the death of Merlin, the enchanter, in the Forest of Bréchéliant. A pious and sincere Breton, I do not place Bréchéliant near Quintin, like the Roman du Rou; I take Bréchéliant to be Becherel, near Combourg. More fortunate than Wace, I have seen Morgen the fairy, and met Tristan and Yseult; I have taken up water from the spring in my hand — the golden bowl I never could find—and, throwing that water in the air, I have raised storms. In my Memoirs it will be seen what effect those storms have had upon me.

The anonymous trouvère, the continuator of Brut of England, is an Anglo-Saxon: he speaks with bitter animosity of William, who came "not to erect towns, but to destroy them; not to build hamlets, but to sow forests." The poem contains an ingenious episode.

The Conqueror wishes to know what shall be the fate of his posterity. He convokes an assembly of high personages and the principal ecclesiastics of England and Normandy. The council, in great embarrassment, sends separately for the King's three sons. Robert de Courthose appears first. "Fair son," says a learned clerk to him, "if the Almighty had made thee a bird, what bird wouldst thou be?"

—"A sparrow-hawk," replies Robert. "That bird, for its courage is valued by princes, loved by knights, carried on the hand by ladies."

After Robert de Courthose comes William Rufus. He would have "wished to be an eagle, because the eagle is the king of birds."

After William Rufus appeared Henry, his younger brother. He would have been "a starling, because the starling is a simple bird that does no harm to any one, and flies about with others of its kind: if it is put into a cage it comforts itself by singing."

Courthose, courageous as the sparrow-hawk, died in prison; William, a king, like the eagle, was cruel and came to a bad end; Henry was mild, beneficent, like the starling: he had his troubles, but they were soothed by time—a long sad complaint and much to the same tune.

THE ANGLO-NORMAN TROUVÈRES CONTINUED.

TERRESTRIAL PARADISE—DESCENT TO HELL.

An anonymous trouvère describes the voyage of St. Bradan, an Irishman, to the terrestrial Paradise. The saint, accompanied by his monks, discovers in an island the paradise of birds: these birds respond to the psalms sung by the saint. They were probably the ancestors of the bird in the gardens of Armida.

In another island is a tree, with leaves of a pale red. White birds are perched upon the tree. One of these birds, being questioned by St. Bradan, gives this answer: "My companions and I are angels expelled from heaven with Lucifer. We obeyed him as our chief in his quality of archangel; but, as we did not share his pride, God has only banished us to

this island." Here is the repentant angel of Klopstock.

From the paradise of birds, St. Bradan, still attended by his monks, proceeds to another island, in which stands the abbey of St. Alban.

He again puts to sea, is attacked by a serpent, which a beast sent by God comes and battles with, and afterwards by a gryphon which is swallowed by a dragon. Strange fishes assemble to listen to the hermit celebrating the feast of St. Peter on the open sea.

The bark arrives at hell. The accursed region is enveloped in darkness: smoke, sparks, and flames form a veil impenetrable to the light of day. On a steep rock is perceived a naked man; his flesh, torn by the scourge, is ready to drop from the bones; his face is covered by a cloth. This wretch is Judas. He describes to the saint his inexpressible torments: there is a fresh one for every day in the week.

Marie, surnamed of France, by whom we have a collection of lays, turned into verse the Purgatory of St. Patrick of Ireland, which Henry, a monk of Saltry, originally composed in Latin, in the 12th century. The descent to the place of expiation was by a cavern, over which St. Patrick built a convent.

Two other trouvères took up the same subject. They conduct O'Wein to purgatory; the knight passes by hell, the torments of which he witnesses, arrives at the terrestial paradise, and approaches the celestial.

Adam de Ross sings in his turn the descent of St. Paul to hell. The archangel Michael performs the office of guide to the apostle. "My good man," says he to him, "follow me without fear and without suspicion. God commands me to show thee the gnashing of teeth, the pangs, and the anguish, which sinners undergo."

Michael goes first: Paul follows, repeating psalms. At the gate of hell grows a tree of fire; from its branches hang the souls of misers and scandal-mongers. The air is full of flying imps who drag the wicked to the furnace.

The two travellers pursue their way through the desolate regions. The archangel explains to the apostle the torments inflicted for different crimes; from the bosom of an immense forge, a vast mine, in which burning furnaces roar and sparkle, issue rivers of molten metals, in which demons are disporting. The further the envoys of heaven penetrate into the bowels of the earth, the more terrible become the torments. St. Paul is filled with pity.

They arrive at the mouth of a pit sealed with seven seals. The archangel removes the seals, and pushes back the apostle, till the pestilential vapour exhaled from the pit has passed off. From the bottom of this pit, ascend the moans of the greatest sinners. St. Paul inquires how long their punishment shall last. "One hundred and forty thousand years," replies St. Michael "though I am not quite sure of it."

The apostle begs the archangel to implore the Almighty to mitigate the punishment of these reprobate spirits. Their prayers, joined by those of other compassionate angels, are granted: God ordains that, in future, the tortures shall be suspended from Saturday till Monday morning. St. Bradan, in his voyage to the terrestial paradise, had obtained the same favour for Judas. The term for this suspension of punishment is the same as that fixed for the first truces, which were called *peace of God.*

The middle ages are not the time of style, properly so called, but they are the time of picturesque expression, of natural delineation, and of fertile invention. We see, with a smile of admiration, what simple nations derived from the creed that was taught them. To their strong, lively, vagabond imagination, their cruel manners, their indomitable courage, their

ill-repressed instinct of conquest and travel, the priests, missionaries, and poets, presented marvellous torments, everlasting perils, invasions to attempt, but without change of place, in unknown regions. The terrestial paradise, which the christian muse showed in perspective to the barbarians, a place of delight where they could arrive only by a long road and after severe hardships, was like that Rome which they had formerly sought at the extremity of the world, amidst a thousand dangers, torch and sword in hand.

The voyage of Ulysses to the Cimmerian fields, and the descent of Æneas to Tartarus, comprehend the primitive idea of these fictions. This idea was communicated to the christian ages by classic literature; it is met with throughout the whole of the middle ages, by the title of *visio inferni*. The tree of fire, from the branches of which are suspended the souls of the covetous, is the elm to which dreams resort in the vestibule of Tartarus. (Æneid. B. VI.)

The three works of the trouvère of St. Bradan, Marie of France, and Adam de Ross, remind one of the paradise, the purgatory, and the hell, of the Divina Commedia. St. Paul is conducted to hell by the archangel Michael, as

Dante by Virgil. St. Paul is filled with pity, like Dante. St. Bradan finds Judas, as Dante met with him, the most tortured of the damned. In the trouvère, the pains of Judas are varied (the trouvère fixes the duration of his torments at one hundred and forty thousand years); in the poet his misery is uniform, constant, as eternity.

Cancellieri asserts that Dante derived the ground-work of his composition from the *Visions of Hell* by Alberic, a monk of Monte Cassino, about the year 1120.

The miracles and mysteries formed an essential part of the literature of all christian countries, from the tenth to the sixteenth century. Geoffrey, abbot of St. Alban's, composed the miracle of St. Catherine in the language of Oil: this was, as far as we yet know, the first drama written in French. The author had it performed in a church in 1110, and borrowed the copes of St. Alban's abbey for the use of the actors.

The clergy encouraged these exhibitions as conveying public instruction in the history of christianity. The Grecian theatre had the same religious origin. The miracles and mysteries were performed in broad daylight, in churches, in the court-yards of courts of justice, in cemeteries, and in the crossings of streets in towns.

They were announced from the pulpit by the preacher, and frequently an abbot or a bishop presided at them with the crosier in his hand. The entertainment sometimes concluded with fights of animals, jousts, wrestling, dancing, and racing. Clement VI. granted one thousand years' indulgence to those pious persons who should attend the series of sacred dramas at Chester.

These performances were for the commonalty what tournaments were for the nobles. The middle ages observed a much greater number of solemnities than modern times; genuine enjoyments are every where the offspring of national creeds. The revolution has not had the power to create a single durable festival; and if there are still popular holidays in spite of incredulity, they all belong to the old christianity; mankind do not attach themselves strongly to any pleasures but such as are at once recollections and hopes. Philosophy makes men dull; an atheist people has but one festival—that of death.

Theatrical representations passed from the clergy to the laity. The merchant drapers of London exhibited the *Creation*. Adam and Eve appeared stark naked. The dyers enacted the *Deluge*. Noah's wife refused to go into the ark, and soundly boxed her husband's ears.

The course of lectures which M. Magnin is at this moment delivering will complete the circle of knowledge respecting the mysteries and the epoch which preceded them—a subject replete with interest and inherent in the bowels of our history.

Satires occupied a large place in the poetry of Norman England. The ladies, whatever respect was paid them by the knights, received very little from the jongleurs; these reproached them with their fondness for dress and dogs. "If you are going to visit a lady, wrap yourself up well, nay, borrow the cowl of St. Peter of Rome; for the moment you enter you will be attacked by dogs of all sorts. You will encounter the little ones leaping like squirrels, and enormous greyhounds rampant as lions. (Abbé de la Rue.)

The ladies are also abused in the "Wedding of the Devil's Daughter," and in the "Apparition of St. Peter," a poem against marriage. The pope, the bishops, the monks, the nobles, the rich, the physicians, the different conditions of life come in for their share in the *Roman des Romans*, the *Bezant de Dieu*, the *Paternoster des Gourmands*, the *Litanies des Vilains*, the *Credo du Juif*, the *Epître et l'Evangile des Femmes*, and es-

pecially in those general satires which bear the name of *Bible*.

The *Crede* of Piers Plowman* is a bitter satire on the mendicant monks :

Than turned I ayen when I hadde al ytoted,
And fond on a freitoure a frere on a benche
A greet chorl and a grym, growen as a tonne
With a face so fat as a ful bleddere,
Blowen bretful of brethe, and as a bagge honged
On bothen his chekes, and his chyn with a chollede
So greet as a gos ey, growen al of grece,
That al wagged his fleish, as a quick myre.

The nobility of both sexes sang, loved, enjoyed themselves, and at times did not believe too firmly in God. The Vicomte de Baucaire threatens his son Aucassin with hell, unless he parts from Nicolette, his mistress. The youth replies that he cares very little about paradise, full of idle half-naked monks, filthy old priests, and ragged hermits ; he would rather go to hell, where great kings, paladins, and barons, hold their plenary court ; there he shall find beautiful

† Piers Plowman is a generic name, which most of the poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries have attached to their satires : thus there is the " Vision of Piers Plowman,' by Robert Langland, the " Crede of Piers Plowman," composed about the year 1390 &c. These different works must not be confounded one with another.

women, who have loved minstrels and jongleurs, fond of wine and mirth. A troubadour says his *Pater*, that God may grant to all lovers the pleasure which he enjoyed one night with his Ogine.

CHANGE IN LITERATURE—STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TWO LANGUAGES.

THE epoch of Anglo-Gallic, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman trouvères, troubadours, jongleurs, and minstrels, extended over a period of nearly three hundred years, from William the Conqueror to Edward III. Feudality altered by degrees its spirit and its customs; the crusades enlarged the circle of ideas and images; poetry followed the impulse of manners; the organ, the harp, and the bagpipe, acquired new sounds in the abbeys, in the castles, and on the mountains. Edward I., according to popular tradition, doomed to death the Welsh minstrels, who kept alive in the breasts of the ancient Britons the love of country and hatred for the stranger. Gray represents the last of these bards, commencing his song with these words:

Ruin seize thee, ruthless king!

Lays, satirical poems (sirvantois), versified romances, &c., became detached poetical compo-

sitions, abridged histories, proportioned to the extent of the memory. You perceive, from the very form of the poems, as well as the style and the expression of the sentiments, that a revolution has been effected, that centuries have passed away.

The introduction of Provençal and French poetry, by the aid of Norman troubadours and jongleurs, was attended with the inconvenience of depriving the Saxon compositions of their native originality; they became nothing more than an imitation, occasionally, no doubt, a delightful one, of a foreign nature. A poet compares the object of his love with a bird whose plumage assumes the hues of every flower and precious stone. Too discreet to make known his mistress to the profane vulgar, the lover gracefully says:

Hire nome is in a note of the nyghtingale;

and he sends the inquisitive to Jean to enquire this name.

The language of Oil, in use among the conquerors, holding the spoils of aristocratic wealth, recorded the deeds of knights and the loves of noble ladies. William the Conqueror, according to Sugulph, abhorred the English language. He ordered that the laws and judicial acts should be

written in French, and that children in schools should be taught in French the first rudiments of literature.

I have said that French and English properties were mixed together by the Conquest, and that French proprietors transferred their idiom to the conquered country. This is proved by the fact, that the religious of Brittany, of the Mans, of Normandy, possessed convents and abbeys in Great Britain; that families from the Ponthieu, Normandy, and Brittany, and, subsequently, from all the provinces brought by Eleanor of Guienne, or conquered by Edward III. and Henry V., possessed lands in the Anglo-Norman kingdom.

William the Bastard bestowed upon his son-in-law, Alain, Duke of Bretagne, four hundred and forty-two lordships in Yorkshire; they, subsequently, composed the earldom of Richmond (Domesday book). The Dukes of Bretagne, successors of Alain, infeoffed these domains to Breton knights, younger sons of the families of Rohan, Tintenia, Châteaubriand, Goyon, Montboucher; and long afterwards the earldom of Richmond (honor Richemundiæ) was erected into a dukedom under Charles II., in favour of one of his own natural sons.

The French language despised and warred against that of the Anglo-Saxons. "At one time a Saxon bishop was expelled from his see, because he was ignorant of French; at another, monastic charters were torn to pieces, because they were written in Saxon; Norman judges would condemn an accused person unheard, because he spoke English only; for the same reason they would strip a family of their rightful inheritance, and dole out to it, as a favour, a small portion of its property." (Thierry).

The two rival languages were as the standards of two parties, beneath which a contest of extermination was carried on. It was a wide spread struggle; they supplied the barbarisms of the Latin which was then spoken; William Wyrcester wrote to the Duke of York: "et ARRIVAVIT apud Redbanke prope Cestriam," and he "arrived at Redbank, near Chester." John Rous said that the Marquis of Dorset and Sir Thomas Grey were compelled to fly, for having contrived the death of the Duke (the Duke of York, Regent under Henry VI.), Protector of England, quod ipsi CONTRIVISSENT mortem ducis protectoris Angliæ.

Both languages occasionally alternate in the same practical composition and rhyme together;

the jongleurs constantly extolled the beauty of the French; they lauded

Mainte belle dame courtoise
Bien parlant en langue françoise;

adding:

Il est sages, biaux et courtois
Et gentiel home de par francois
Miex valt sa parole françoise
Que de Glocestre la ricoise.

Seïez de bouere et cortois
Et sachez bien parler françois.

The *françois* always brought in the rhyme of *courtois*, to the manifest displeasure of the Anglo-Saxons.

Edward I. paid the most respectful attention to the reading of a Latin bull of Boniface VIII., and ordered it to be translated into French, because he had not understood its meaning.

Peter de Blois informs us that, in the beginning of the twelfth century, Gillibert was ignorant of English; being well versed, however, in Latin and French, he preached to *the people* on Sundays and holydays. Wadington, a poet and historian of the thirteenth century, intimates that he writes his works in French, and not in English, in order that he may be the better understood by *high* and *low*, a proof that the

foreign idiom was on the point of stifling the ancient idiom of the land.

There exists in the Harleian library a French and epistolary grammar for all professions, another in French verse, and a Roman-Latin glossary.

French works were occasionally translated into English; this, in the language of the poets, was done through commiseration for the *lewed*, the low and ignorant class.

> For lewed men I undyrtoke
> In Englyshe tonge to make this boke.

The poor Scaldes, beaten by the troubadours of the victors, and living retired amongst the vanquished, laboured, by means of the multitude, to recover the ascendency. They celebrated plebeian adventures, and in a series of pictures brought *Piers Ploughman* on the stage. Such was the line of demarcation between rival muses and rival people. The national muse taunted the gentleman with speaking only the French language:

> French use this gentleman,
> And never English can.

A proverb said: "Jack needs nought but a knowledge of French to set up for a gentleman."

These divisions were of remote date. The Anglo-Saxon Earl Guallève (the renowned Waltheof) had been beheaded, during the Conqueror's reign, for having joined in the conspiracy of Roger Earl of Hereford and Ralph Earl of Norfolk. Guallève, Earl of Northampton, was the son of Siward Duke of Northumbria. His body was removed by Abbot Ulfketel to Croyland. Having been taken up a few years afterwards, it was found entire, with the head united to the trunk; a slight streak alone indicated where the steel had severed the neck; by this collar of martyrdom, the Anglo-Saxons acknowledged Guallève for a saint. The Normans ridiculed the miracle. Audin, a monk of that nation, openly declared that the son of Siward had been no better than a traitor, and had justly forfeited his life. Audin suddenly died of a bowel complaint.

Abbot Goisfred, successor of Ingulf, had a vision. He beheld one night near the Earl's tomb Bartholomew the Apostle, and Guthlac the Anchorite, clothed in white garments. Bartholomew, holding Guallève's head, which had been restored to its place, said: "He was not beheaded." Guthlac, standing at Guallève's feet, replied, "He was once an Earl." The Apostle rejoined, "He is now a King." The

Anglo-Saxon population flocked in pilgrimage to the tomb of their fellow countryman. This story exhibits in a striking manner the separation and antipathy of the two nations. (*Orderic Vital.*)

In fact, the use of the French language is according to Milton, of a much more remote antiquity, for he fixes the date of it in the reign of Edward the Confessor.

" Then," says he, began the English to lay, aside their own ancient customs and in many things to imitate French manners, the great peers to speak French in their houses, in French to write their bills and letters, as a great piece of gentility ashamed of their own: a presage of their subjection shortly to that people, whose fashions and language they affected so slavishly." (*Hist. of England.* Book VI.)

RETURN, BY LAW, TO THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE.

At the very moment when the French language was obtaining the ascendency, owing to the victories of Edward III, to the permanency of English armies on the French soil, to the occupation of cities wrested from our country, this monarch, standing in need of the English *pédaille* and *ribaudaille*, granted the use of the insular idiom in *civil pleadings*; nevertheless, the judgments resulting from these pleadings were always delivered in the French idiom. The very act of Parliament of 1362, which directs that the English idiom shall thenceforward be in use, is drawn up in French. It required nothing short of the scourges of heaven to combine with the laws in extinguishing the language of the conquerors; for it is remarked that on occasion of the great plague of 1349 the French idiom first began to decline.

Whilst Edward tolerated for his own purposes a very limited use of the Anglo-Saxon, he continued, as well as his court, to speak the French language. His mother was a princess of France, in whose name he asserted his right to the crown of St. Louis; the field of battle presents no difference between the combatants: in both armies, brothers are opposed to brothers, fathers to their children; Créci, Poitiers, Agincourt, exhibit no other picture than that of the disasters of a wide spread civil war. French was spoken by Philippa of Hainault, the consort of Edward III; she had Froissart for her secretary, and the curate of Lestines recorded in charming French the loves of Edward and Alice of Salisbury.

The guests of the *vœu du héron* converse in French; the too famous Robert of Artois is the hero of the feast.

By pronouncing the word *voire*—yes—Edward had taken to Philip of Valois the French oath which he afterwards violated. "Sire, you became a man of the King of France, my master, for Guienne and its dependencies, which you acknowledge yourself to hold of him as a peer of France, agreeably to the form of treaties concluded between his predecessors and yours, and to what you and your ancestors have done to

his predecessors, Kings of France, in respect of the same duchy."

After the battle of Créci had been fought, the slain were counted; the narrative comes to us from an Englishman, Michael de Northburgh (*Avesburg hist.*) " Fusrent mortz le Roi de Beaume (Bohême,) le Ducz de Loreigne, le Counte d'Alescun (d'Alençon) le Counte de Flandres, le Counte de Bloys, le Counte de Harcourt et ses deux filtz ; et Philippe de Valois et le Markis qu'est appelé le Elitz (Elu) du Romayns eschappèrent navfrés, à ceo qe homme (on) dist. La summe de bones gentz d'armes qui fusrent mortz en le chaumpe à ceste jour, sans comunes et pédailles (gens de pied) amonte à mille DXLII acomptés."

" The King of Bohemia, the Duke of Lorraine, the Count of Alençon, the Count of Flanders, the Count of Blois, the Count of Harcourt and his two sons, were amongst the dead; Philip of Valois and the Marquis who is called the Elect of the Romans escaped, it is said, with heavy hearts. The number of able men at arms who perished in the field of battle this day, independently of common people and foot-soldiers, amounts to 1542 duly counted."

Whilst the English were thusenumerating in

French, the slain of the *French* army, it must have occurred to their minds that they had not always been conquerors, and that they preserved in their language the very proof of their subjection and of the fickleness of fortune.

In the acts of Rymer, the originals, from 1101 to about 1460, are almost exclusively in Latin and French. The numerous statutes of the reigns of Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, and Edward IV were drawn up, transcribed upon the rolls, and promulgated in French. We must descend to a period as recent as the year 1425 to discover the first English act of the House of Commons. Nevertheless, when Henry V besieged Rouen in 1418, the ambassadors whom he affected an eagerness to send to the conferences of the Pont-de-l'Arche, declined the mission under the pretext of their *not knowing the language of the country*; but this fact is of no value; Henry *was averse to peace*. After his death, the soldiers of his army are found speaking the same language as the Maid of Orleans, and giving evidence for the prosecution, on the trial of that heroic woman.

At last, the Parliament convoked at Westminster the 20th of January 1483, under Richard III, drew up the bills in English, and its

example was followed by succeeding parliaments. The three kingdoms of Great Britain were on the verge of adopting the French language: Shakespeare would then have written in the idiom of Rabelais.

At the same time that the public tribunals reverted by command to the native dialect, Chaucer was called to restore the harp of the bards; but Gower, his predecessor by a few years, and his rival, still composed in both languages, and proved far more successful in French than in English. Froissart, Gower's cotemporary, has nothing to compare in point of grace and elegance with this ballad of the poet beyond sea.

Amour est chose merveïleuse
Dont nul porra avoir le droit certain :
Amour de soi est la foi trichereuse
Qui plus promet, et moins aporte en main ;
Le riche est povre, et le courtois vilain,
L'épine est molle et la rose est ortie,
En toutz errours l'amour se justifie.

L'amer est doulz, la doulceur furieuse,
Labour est aise, et le repos grevein,
Le doel plesant, la seurté périleuse,
Le halt est bas ; si est le bas haltein,
Quant l'en mieulx quide avoir, tout est en vein ;
Le ris en plour, le sens torne en folie,
En toutz errours l'amour se justifie.

. . . . . .

Ore est amour salvage, ore est soulein,
N'est qui d'amour poet dire la sotie,
Amour est serf, amour est souverein,
En toutz errours amour se justifie.

The English language of Chaucer is far from possessing the polish of old French, which already attains some degree of perfection in this minor species of literature. Nevertheless, the idiom of the Anglo-Saxon poet, a heterogeneous medley of various dialects, has become the stock of modern English.

A courtier, a partisan of the house of Lancaster, a Wickliffite, faithless to his convictions, a traitor to his party, now banished, then travelling in foreign countries, at one time in favour, in disgrace at another, Chaucer had met Petrarch at Padua ; instead of ascending to Saxon sources, he borrowed the spirit of his songs from the troubadours of Provence and the admirer of Laura, and from Boccaccio the character of his tales.

In the *Court of Love*, Chaucer's lady assures him of happiness in the month of May; every thing succeeds well with any one who can wait. The first of May arrives, the birds perform the service in honour of the love of the poet, who is threatened with happiness; the eagle sings the *Veni Creator*, and the nightingale sighs *Domine labia mea aperies.*

The *Ploughman*, still the groundwork of old Piers Ploughman, is not deficient in spirit; the clergy, ladies and lords, are the objects of the poet's attacks:

> Such as can nat ysay ther crede,
> With prayer shul be made prelates;
> Nother canne ther gospell rede,
> Such shul now weldin hie estates.
>
> There was more mercy in Maximine
> And Nero that never was gode,
> Than there is now in some of them,
> When he hath on his furred hode.

The poet composed at his castle of Dunnington, beneath *Chaucer's oak*, his "Canterbury Tales," in the style of the Decameron. The English literature of the middle ages was in its origin disfigured by the Roman literature; modern English literature disguised itself at his birth in that of Italy.

In France this mania for imitation may perhaps have deprived the age of Louis XIV of an originality which would otherwise have graced it; but, as Racine, Boileau, Bossuet, Fénélon, had happily drawn from none but Greek and Latin sources, the genius of the great monarch was found to harmonize with the genius of Athens and of Rome; from this high alliance sprung works which, drawn from models, must in all times serve as models for future works.

Wickliff must be numbered amongst the English authors of Chaucer's age. His first act of reform was an English translation of the Vulgate, which is still consulted as a monument of the language. Treading in his footsteps, Luther translated the Bible into German, but from the Hebrew text.

From the time of Alfred the Great, the founder of British liberty, the nation never was wholly excluded from power. The poems, chronicles, and romances of England have an element which was formerly wanting to ours, the popular element. The dramatic action in the works of our neighbours is vivified by it, and hence arise beauties of contrast with religious, aristocratic, and chivalric manners. One is much surprised to find in Barbour, the Scot, and cotemporary with Chaucer, the subjoined verses on liberty:

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an immortal feeling seems to have imparted immortal youth to the language; the style and the words still possess fresh vigour :

> Ah, freedom is a noble thing!
> Freedom makes man to have a liking;
> Freedom all solace to man gives.
> He lives at ease that freely lives;
> A noble heart may have none ease,
> Nor nought else that may it please,
> If freedom fail.

Our French poets were then far removed from that dignity of language of which Dante had set an example in Italy.

SENTIMENT OF POLITICAL LIBERTY—WHY DIFFERENT AMONGST ENGLISH AND FRENCH WRITERS OF THE 16th AND 17th CENTURIES—PLACE HELD BY THE PEOPLE IN THE ANCIENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE TWO MONARCHIES.

POLITICAL institutions have not less influence than morals upon literature. If the sentiment of liberty displays itself less at this period amongst the writers of our country than amongst those of England, the cause is to be found in the dissimilar positions of both; having attained an unequal degree of public power by different roads, they could not have the same language.

It is worth our while to pause here for a moment, in order to extract from poetry the philosophy of history, which is often found concealed under it; we shall better understand how French and English poetry have been led to speak of liberty, or to leave it unnoticed, when we recall to mind the part which each people performed in its national institutions. In what relates to England, I shall only have to transcribe a few

pages of a very short but excellent work, entitled "General View of the Constitution of England by an Englishman," a work far superior to what was once hastily written by the Genoese theorist, Delolme, with Blackstone for his authority.

"For upwards of two hundred years after William the Conqueror, the English parliament was in its composition and its chief functions, nearly analogous to the parliament of Paris from Hugh Capet to St. Louis, with this difference, however, that the French parliament, though sometimes considered a national one, was only in reality the parliament of the duchy of France, and of a few other adjacent provinces, whereas the parliament of England was an assembly of the principal personages of the kingdom, and its authority was every where acknowledged.

"The members of both parliaments, English and French, were the barons, knights, and prelates, and a certain number of lawyers, all convoked for a limited time by letters from the sovereign. Each of these parliaments formed only a single house; they were as much a supreme court

* Having been baffled in our search after this work, we are reluctantly compelled to translate from the French version of the author the passages which he has extracted.—*Translator.*

of justice as a political assembly. But whilst the members of the English parliaments were daily acquiring greater political importance, and their *consultative* insensibly merged into a *deliberative* voice, so much so that they ended by *legally* establishing their power to refuse every demand of their sovereigns, who might equally refuse assent to their demands, the members of the parliament of Paris were gradually deprived of their consideration, owing to the progressive increase of the kingly power: instead of obtaining a *deliberative* voice in important national affairs, they were daily less consulted on political questions, and at length came to be considered as being principally judges of the baronial court of the duchy of France.

* * * * *

"Philip Augustus established the institution of the peerage, and rendered the peers members of the parliament of Paris, in order to augment its importance by an image of the ancient national baronage, without thereby lessening in any degree the royal influence. If, on the annexation of Normandy to the crown, he had conferred on the chief Norman barons and churchmen the right of being members of the parliament of Paris, and his successors had followed the same course in the different provinces of which

they successively obtained possession, the parliament of Paris would have become a real national parliament, like that of England, and the deputies of the principal cities would eventually have found their places in it. Philip, however, like his successors, deemed it preferable to allow of the separate existence of the *parliaments* or *estates* of those provinces which he united to the crown rather than aggregate them to the government of France. The provinces were also jealous of the maintenance of their own parliaments. St. Louis once summoned to the parliament a great number of the higher nobility and prelates of the whole kingdom, with deputies from several cities; so that this parliament bore a perfect resemblance to the English parliament of the same period; but this example was neither followed up by himself nor by Philip the Bold, his successor, who endeavoured, on the contrary, by every means in his power to discourage the high nobility from attending parliament.

"It was Philip the Fair who gave the severest blow to the authority of Parliament, by his *invention* of the states-general, which never existed before his reign, whatever the framers of systems may assert to the contrary. By only allowing the prelates and higher nobility to attend the

estates by deputation, and by thus blending them with the rest of the nobility and clergy, he deprived them of all their importance; and as he likewise limited the functions of the *estates* to the expression of their *grievances*, he nearly reduced them to a mere nonentity.

* * * * *

"Shortly after the regular introduction of deputies or knights of shires to Parliament, a great change took place in it, which was attended with highly important effects. This change consisted in the formation of the House of Commons, a formation which chance brought about, and of which the politicians of the time did not assuredly foresee the results. Independently of the subsidies provided by Parliament, since the towns had become political corporations, enjoying different privileges, it had been the practice of kings to demand of them, from time to time, and without the advice of Parliament, various sums of money, proportioned to the greater or less importance and wealth of those times. These sums of money were fixed by common consent between the royal commissioners and the chief inhabitants of each town. At last, under Henry III., towards the middle of the thirteenth century, the celebrated Earl of Leicester summoned to Parliament the deputies of the principal towns,

thereby hoping the more effectually to obtain from them the money he stood in need of for the prosecution of his criminal designs. This example, however, was not followed in succeeding Parliaments. It was only towards the close of the thirteenth century, in the year 1295, that, urged by the want of money, and harassed by partial negotiations with the burgesses of the different towns, Edward I. conceived the idea of regularly convoking two deputies from each town, at the time and place where the Parliament met. These deputies took no part in this assembly, and had no voice in the national deliberations. Their functions were restricted to the object of determining the sum of money which they might raise amongst themselves for the *tallage* of their respective towns. These deputies were at the same time authorised to represent the wants of their towns; and, with the view of raising from them the largest possible sum, every attention was paid to their complaints, and all requests on their part, which were deemed reasonable, were assented to. In the beginning, they deliberated separately from the barons and knights, and followed the instructions of their constituents in respect to the grievances they had to prefer, and the *maximum* of the tax they were to grant.

* * * * *

"It cannot be stated with perfect accuracy when the deputies of counties assembled, for the first time, in the same hall with the deputies of towns. Although these two species of deputies greatly differed from each other in regard to their political existence, there was, nevertheless, some uniformity between them in their common capacity of *representatives* of their fellow-citizens; and it is probable that the *knights* of shires, as well as the *burgesses* of towns, were often compelled to follow the instructions of their constituents. It was, therefore, deemed more convenient, for expediting public business, that they should meet together in the same hall, and that the result of their deliberations should be afterwards sent to the peers, rather than allow the knights to deliberate apart in the hall of the latter. It is likewise probable that the great barons, who began to consider the knights as their inferiors, were glad of a decent pretext for removing them from their assembly. Circumstances of a more accidental nature, such as the greater or smaller dimensions of the hall in which the peers met together, may have caused the separation of the members of Parliament. Be this as it may, it is certain that, at the commencement of the fourteenth century, the deputies of counties and those of towns met in the

same hall. There existed, however, in spite of this junction, a very striking difference between them; the knights of shires were the integral portion of the Parliament, and deliberated on all matters in the same manner as great barons or peers, whereas, the deputies of towns had no power beyond that of regulating the tax which their constituents were called upon to pay; this was no sooner done, than they were at liberty to return home without awaiting the end of the session. It is natural, however, to suppose that in proportion as the towns increased in wealth their deputies acquired greater importance; and that, instead of returning home when they had regulated the tax, they remained to attend to the deliberations of the knights respecting the laws in general, none of which were devoid of interest to them. By degrees they were consulted on the subject. From *consultation* to *deliberation* there is but a shade; accordingly, towards the close of the fourteenth century, the deputies of towns had acquired all the political rights enjoyed by those of shires, and they were all blended under the general appellation of deputies of the *Commons*."

It is impossible to explain in a clearer manner how the English Parliament acquired its for-

mation, and how, at the moment of attaining similar institutions, we were hurried into another course. The remainder of the pamphlet, where the author examines the principle of the English aristocracy, the nature of the pretended *veto*, and the imaginary balance of the three powers, evinces no less rectitude of judgment and adherence to facts.

In France, the so called Parliament of Paris, and afterwards the States General, were not divided into two chambers; the clergy, composing a separate class, were not blended with the barons, the peers, and the knights; the latter did not unite with the deputies of cities, but remained with the barons. The third estate continued separate. Thence arose three orders, classed according to numbers, the first, second, and third. This constitution of the States General, the national power of which was never acknowledged by all France, was re-produced in the distinct provincial states, the real sovereigns of those provinces. But the third estate, which never acquired, in the general or provincial states, any degree of importance, except in times of disturbance, usurped by other means the public power.

The *three orders* are always spoken of as essentially constituting what are called the States

General. It happened, nevertheless, that some bailiwicks named deputies for only *one* or *two* orders. In 1614, the bailiwick of Amboise did not name any for the clergy or the nobility; nor the bailiwick of Châteauneuf, in Thimerais, for the clergy or the third estate; the Puy; La Rochelle, the Lauraguais, Calais, the Upper March, Chatelleraut, failed to send any for the clergy, and Montdidier and Roy for the nobility. Still the states of 1614 were called *States General.* Accordingly, the old chronicles, speaking in more correct language, when they allude to our national assemblies, either call them the *three estates*, the *notable burgesses*, or *the barons and bishops*, as the case might be, and assign to those assemblies, thus constituted, the same legislative authority.

It frequently happened, in the several provinces, that the third estate, though convoked, did not depute, and for an obvious reason, however it may have overlooked; the third estate had usurped the magistracy, to the prejudice of military men; it exercised, in that profession, a paramount sway, in the characters of judge, counsellor, solicitor, registrar, clerk, &c. &c.; it enacted the civil and criminal laws, and, aided by the encroachment of the Parliaments, it even wielded the political power. Three-fourths of the

ministers of the crown were taken from its ranks; it frequently commanded the armies through the military dignity of marshal. The fortune, honour, and lives of the citizens were at its mercy; all bowed to its decrees; every head fell under the sword of its justice. When, therefore, it thus enjoyed *undisputed* possession of unlimited power, what occasion had it to avert a slender portion of that power in assemblies where it had been seen on its knees!

Metamorphosed into monks, the people had sought the shelter of cloisters, and governed society by religious opinions; metamorphosed into collectors, ministers of finance, and manufacturers, the people had fled for shelter to the financial department, and governed society by means of gold; metamorphosed into magistrates, the people had sought the public tribunals for shelter, and governed society by the arm of the law. That imposing monarchy of France, aristocratic in its parts, was democratic in its conjoint state, under the control of its sovereign, with whom it was in perfect harmony, and generally acted in concert; this is the secret of its prolonged existence.

There can now be no difficulty in understanding why, in 1789, the third estate suddenly usurped power over the whole nation; it had

seized all the high posts, secured all employments. The people, having had but a small share in the constitution of the state, but being incorporated in the other powers, found itself in a condition to conquer the only liberty which it lacked, political liberty. In England, on the contrary, having held for many centuries an important rank in the constitution, having put to death many of its nobility and of its sovereigns, bestowed and taken away crowns, the people finds itself arrested at the moment when it claims to extend its rights: it has to wage war against itself, it stands in its own way, and is an obstacle to its own progress. This is evidently the popular liberty of England under its ancient form, which is struggling at the present day against the popular liberty under its new aspect.

Well then, might Barbour extol that liberty in the noble verses I have quoted at the end of the preceding chapter: well might he extol it at a time when it was unknown in France to the author of the *Dictée*, of *l'Epinette amoureuse*, *ballades*, *virelais*, *Plaidoyer de la rose et de la violette*; a liberty equally unknown, at the same time, to Christina de Pisan, the Venitian, and to the translator of Æsop's Fables, who published them by the title of *Bestiaire*.

JAMES I. KING OF SCOTLAND. DUMBARD. DOUGLAS. WORCESTER. RIVERS.

JAMES I. the most accomplished and most unfortunate of those ill-fated sovereigns who reigned in Scotland, ranked as a poet above Barbour, Occleve, and Lydgate. A captive in England during eighteen years, he composed in prison his *King's Quair*, a poem in six cantos, divided into stanzas of seven lines each. Lady Jane Beaufort inspired his lay.

KING'S QUAIR—CANTO II.

Bewailing in my chamber thus allone,
Despaired of all joye and remedye,
For-tirit of my lhot and wo-begone,
And to the wyndow gan I walk in hye,
To see the warld and folk that went forbye,
As for the tyme though I of mirthis fude
Myght have no more, to luke it did me gude.

And on the small grene twistis sat
The lytil suete nyghtingale and song
So loud and clere, the ympnis consecrat
Of luvis use now soft now loud among,
That all the gardynis and the wallis rong.

And therewith kest I down myn eye ageyne,
Quharre as I saw walkyng under the toure
Full secretely, new cumyn hir to pleyne,
The fairest or the freschest zoung floure
That ever I saw methought before that houre
For quhich sodayne abate anon astert
The blude of all my body to my hert.

The prisoner is favoured with visions; he is transported in a cloud to the planet Venus; he journeys on to Minerva's palace. Recovered from his ecstasy, he approaches the window.

In hye unto the wyndow gan I walk
Moving within my spirit of this sight,
Quhare sodeynly a turture, quhite as calk
So evinly upon my hand gan lyt,
And vnto me sche turnyt hir, full ryt,
Of quham the chere in hir birdis assort
Gave me in hert kalendis of confort,

This fayr bird ryt in hir bill gan hold
Of red jerrofleris, with their stalks grene,
A faire branch, quhare written was with gold,
On every lefe, wicht branchis bryt and schen,
In compas fair full plesandly to sene,
A plane sentence, quwhich, as I can devise
And have in mynd, said ryt on this wise.

Awake! awake! I bring, lufar, I bring
The newis glad, that blissfull ben and sure
Of thy confort: now lauch, and play, and sing,
That art beside so glad an auenture:
Fore in the hevyn decretit is ye cure:
And vnto me the flouris faire did present;
With wyngis spred hir wayis furth sche went.

Quhilk up anon I tuke, and as I gesse,
Ane hundred tymes, or I forthir went,
I have it red, with hertfull glaidnesse,
And half with hope and half with dred it hent
And at my beddis hed, with gud entent,
I haue it fayr pynit vp, and this
First takyn was of all my help and blisse.

To James I. is to be ascribed the style of plaintive music unknown before him.

It was during the reign of James I, towards the year 1446, that Henry the Minstrel, or blind Harry, celebrated in his songs the warrior Wallace, so popular in Scotland By some critics a preference is given to Henry the Minstrel over Barbour and Chaucer.

Dumbard and Douglas likewise flourished in Scotland.

In England, the Earl of Worcester and the Earl of Rivers, both patrons and promoters of literature, perished on the scaffold. Rivers and Caxton his printer and panegyrist, are the first authors whose writings have been handed down

to us by the English press. The productions of Rivers consisted in translations from the French; one, in particular, of Christina de Pisan's Proverbs.

Under Henry VII, the first of the Tudors, there existed many poets destitute of genius one of the servants of that king who put an end to the war between the houses of York and Lancaster, possessed some talent for satirical compositions.

THE popular ballads and songs, whether Scotch, English, or Irish, of the 14th and 15th. centuries, possess, without being wholly unaffected, a character of simplicity. Unaffectedness is of Gallic growth, plainness proceeds from the heart, unaffectedness from the mind; a plain man is usually a good man; an unaffected may not always be a good man; unaffectedness, however, is always natural: plainness is often the effect of art.

The most celebrated of English and Scotch ballads are *The Children in the Wood* and the *Song of the Willow* altered by Shakespeare. The original exhibits the despair of a deserted lover.

A poor soule sat sighing under a sicamore tree
O willow, willow, willow!
With his hand on his bosom, his head on his knee:
O willow, willow, willow!
O willow, willow, willow!
Sing, O the green willow shall be my garland!

This song so powerfully captivated the imagination of English poets, that Rowe has not hesitated to imitate it from Shakespeare.

Robin Hood, a renowned robber, figures as a favourite personage in ballads: there are a score of songs respecting his birth, his pretended fight with King Richard, and his exploits with Little John: his long history in rhyme, and that of Adam Bell, resembled the Latin complaints of the *Jacquerie*, or the dying confessions which the people recited in our streets.

> Or prions le doux Rédempteur,
> Qu'il nous préserve de malheur,
> De la potence, et des galères,
> Et de plusieurs autres misères.

Lady Ann Bothwell's Lament is the *Dors mon enfant* of *Berquin*; the *Friar* is the adventure of Father Arsène, which latter is derived from the *Count de Comminges*. The *Hunting in Chevy Chase*, a very fine ballad, describes the fight between Earl Douglas and Earl Percy in a forest on the Scottish border.

The two ballads which, in my opinion, are least of a common-place character, are *Sir Cauline* and *Childe Waters*: a knowledge of English is not requisite to appreciate their

rhythm; their measure is as distinct as that of a waltz; each stanza consists of four lines alternately of eight and six syllables; some redundant verses are added to the stanzas of *Sir Cauline*. The language of these ballads is not altogether that of the period in which they were composed; they seem to be clothed in a modern style.

Sir Cauline, a knight attached to the court of an Irish king, has fallen in love with Christabel, only daughter of that monarch; Christabel, like all the well educated princesses of that period, is acquainted with the virtue of simples. Sir Cauline is love-sick. On a certain Sunday, the king, after having heard mass, repairs to dinner. He enquires for Sir Cauline, whose duty it is with serve him with drink; a courtier replies that the cupbearer is in bed. The king desires his daughter to visit the knight and to carry him wine and bread.

Fair Christabelle to his chaumber goes,
Her maidens following nye:
O well, she sayth, how doth my lord?
O sicke, thou fayre ladye,

Now rise up wightlye, man, for shame,
Never lye soe cowardlee;
For it is told in my father's halle
You dye for love of mee.

Fayre ladye, it is for your love
That all this dill I drye:
For if you wold comfort me with a kisse,
Then were I brought from bale to blisse,
No longer would I lye.

Sir knighte, my father is a kinge,
I am his only heire;
Alas! and well you knowe, syr knighte,
I never can be your feere.

O ladye, thou art a kinges daughtér
And I am not thy peere,
But let me doe some deedes of armes,
To be youre bacheleere.

Christabel sends Cauline to the hill of Eldridge, where a solitary thorn grows on the border of a moor. The knight of Eldridge is a foul paynim of mickle might. Sir Cauline meets him in single combat, cuts off his hands and disarms him; Christabel declares that if she may not wed the conqueror, she will have no other fere.

In the second part of the ballad, the king who had gone out to enjoy the fresh evening breeze, unfortunately falls in with Christabel and Cauline engaged *in dalliance sweet*. He immures Cauline in a vault, and Christabel at the top of a tower. His first impulse was to slay the knight, for *an angrye man was hee*.

Yielding however, to the queen's entreaties, he was satisfied with condemning them to perpetual banishment: nevertheless, he attempts to console his weeping daughter, and orders a tournament. An unknown knight, clad in sable armour, enters the lists, followed by a giant, who is pledged to avenge the giant of Eldridge. The sable knight alone ventures to contend with the challenging miscreant, kills him, and dies of his wounds. Christabel also dies, as soon as she has recognized Sir Claudine in the person of the black knight, and dressed his wounds.

Then fayntinge in a deadly swoune,
And with a deep-fette sighe
That burst her gentle heart in twayne.
Faire Christabelle did dye.

Thus did the loves expire like Pyramus and Thisbe. The French ballad says of the latter

Ils étaient si parfaits
Qu'on disaient qu'ils étaient
Les plus beaux de la ville—

verses breathing the purest nature, and such as, thank God, it is now the fashion to compose.

The subject of the ballad of Sir Cauline is to be met with almost every where. The ballad of *Childe Waters* depicts all that is most affecting

and pathetic in private life. The word *childe* or *chield*, *child* at the present day, is used by old English poets as a sort of title: this title is given to Prince Arthur in the *Fairie Queen;* the king's son is named *Childe Tristram.* The subject of this ballad, with the exception of a few stanzas is as follows. It will be observed that Ellen repeats nearly verbatim the words of Childe Waters, in the same manner as Homer's heroes repeat the messages of the chiefs. Nature, when unsophisticated, possesses a common type, the impression of which is stamped upon the manners of all nations.

CHILDE WATERS.

Childe Waters in his stable stoode
And stroakt his milke-white steede:
To him a fayre yonge ladye came
As ever ware woman's weede.

Sayes, Christ you save! good Childe Waters
Sayes, Christ you save! and see
My girdle of gold, that was too longe,
Is now too short for mee.

And all is with one childe of yours,
I feel sturre at my side,
My gowne of greene it is too strait;
Before it was too wide.

If the childe be mine, faire Ellen, he sayd,
Be mine, as you tell mee;
Then take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,
Take them your own to bee.

If the childe be mine, faire Ellen, he sayd,
Be mine as you do sweare;
Then take you Cheshire and Lancashire both,
And make that childe your heyre.

She sayes, I had rather have one kisse,
Childe Waters, of thy mouth,
Than I wolde have Cheshire and Lancashire both,
That lye by north and southe.

And I had rather have one twinkling,
Childe Waters, of thine ee;
Than I wolde have Cheshire and Lancashire both,
To take them mine owne to bee.

To-morrow, Ellen, I must forth ryde
Far into the north countrie;
The fayrest ladye that I can finde,
Ellen must goe with mee.

Thoughe I am not that ladye fayre,
Yet let me goe with thee;
And ever, I praye you, Childe Waters,
Your foot-page let me bee.

If you will my foot-page bee, Ellen,
As you doe tell to mee;
Then you must cut your gowne of greene
An inch above your knee.

Soe must you doe your yellowe lockes
An inch above your ee:
You must tell no man what is my name;
My foot-page then you shall bee.

Shee, all the longe daye Childe Waters rode,
Ran barefoote by his syde;
Yet was he never so courteous a knyghte,
To say, Ellen, will you ryde?

Shee, all the long daye Childe Waters rode,
Ran barefoote thorow the broome;
Yet was he never so courteous a knighte,
To say, put on your shoone.

Ride softlye, she said, O Childe Waters
Why doe you ride so fast?
The childe, which is no man's but thine,
My body itt will brast.

He sayth, seest thou yond water, Ellèn,
That flows from banke to brimme?
I trust in God, O Childe Watèrs,
You never will see me swimme!

But when she came to the water syde
She sayled to the chinne:
Nowe the Lord of Heaven be my speede
For I must learne to swimme.

The salt waters bare up her clothes;
Our Lady bare up her chinne:
Childe Waters was a woe man, good Lord,
To see faire Ellen swimme.

And when shee over the water was,
  Shee then came to his knee:
Hee sayd, come hither, thou fayre Ellèn,
  Loe yonder what I see!

Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellèn?
  Of red gold shines the yate:
Of twenty-four faire ladyes there,
  The fairest is my mate.

Seest thou not yonder hall, Ellen?
  Of red gold shines the towre:
There are twenty-four fayre ladyes there,
  The fayrest is my paramoure.

I see the hall now, Childe Watèrs,
  Of red gold shines the yate:
God give you good now of yourselfe,
  And of your worthy mate!

I see the hall now, Childe Watèrs,
  Of red gold shines the towre:
God give you good now of yourselfe,
  And of your paramoure.

There twenty-four fayre ladyes were
  A-playing at the ball;
And Ellen, the fayrest ladye there,
  Must bring his steed to the stall.

There twenty four fayre ladyes were
  A-playing at the chesse;
And Ellen, the fayrest ladye there.
Must bring his horse to gresse.

And then bespake Childe Waters' sistèr,
These were the words sayd shee;
You have the prettyest page, brothèr,
That ever I did see.

But that his bellye it is so bigge,
His girdle stands so hye:
And ever, I praye you, Childe Watèrs,
Let him in my chamber lye.

It is not fit for a little foot page
That has run through mosse and mire,
To lye in the chamber of any ladye
That wears so rich attyre.

It is more meete for a little foot-page,
That has run through mosse and myre,
To take his supper upon his knee,
And lye by the kitchen fyre.

Now when they had supped every one
To bedd they tooke theyre waye:
He sayd, come hither, my little foot-page,
And hearken what I saye:

Goe thee downe unto yonder towne,
And lowe into the streete,
The fayrest ladye that thou canst finde
Hyre, in mine armes to sleepe;
And take her up in thine armes twaine,
For filing of her feete.

Ellen is gone into the towne,
And lowe into the streete;
The fairest ladye that she colde finde
She hyred in his armes to sleepe;
And tooke her up in her armes twayne,
For filing of her feete.

I praye you nowe, goode Childe Watèrs,
Let me lye at your feete:
For there is no place about this house
Where I may 'saye a sleepe.

He gave her leave, and faire Ellèn
Down at his bed's feet laye:
This done, the night drove on apace,
And, when it was so near the daye,

Hee sayd, Rise up, my little foot-page,
Give my steede corn and haye;
And give him nowe the goode black oates,
To carry mee better awaye.

Up then rose the fayre Ellèn
And gave his steede corne and haye;
And soe shee did the good black oates,
To carry him better awaye.

She leaned her back to the manger side
And grievouslye did groane:
She leaned her back to the manger side,
And there she made her moane.

And that beheard his mother deare,
She heard her woeful woe
She sayd, Rise up, thou Childe Watèrs,
And into thy stable goe;

For in thy stable is a ghost,
That grievouslye doth grone;
Or else some woman labours with childe
She is so woe-begone.

Up then rose Childe Waters soone,
And did on his shirte of silke;
And then he put on his other clothes
On his bodye as white as milke.

And when he came to the stable dore,
Full still there hee did stand,
That he might heare his fayre Ellèn,
Howe she made her monànd.

She sayd, Lullabye mine owne deare childe,
Lullabye, deare childe, dear:
I wolde thy father were a kinge,
Thy mothere layd on a biere!

Peace nowe, hee sayd, good faire Ellèn
Bee of good cheere, I praye;
And the bridale and the churching bothe
Shall bee upon one daye.

A savage character reveals itself in this ballad. Childe Waters is an atrocious wretch; he delights in putting his mistress to the test of the most abominable tortures of mind and body. Eilen, fascinated, submits to them with the resignation of a love which makes light of all sacrifices. She runs a long race on foot; she swims across a river; she submits to every species of humiliation in the castle of the twenty four women; she patiently listens to her lover telling her with a sneer that he loves

the handsomest of them ; at his bidding she goes in quest of a prostitute ; she, poor Ellen, whom he had compelled to run barefooted in the mud, is to bring him that prostitute in her own arms, lest she should soil her feet. Not a murmur ; not a reproach ; and, when giving birth to her child, and in the pain of labour, she lulls it asleep with a nurse's language ; she prays for a throne for Childe-Waters, for herself a coffin. The cruel man is moved, and at last believes himself the father of the innocent little creature. May not, however the nuptials and the churching come too late ?

Have not Childe Waters and Childe Harold some features of resemblance ? Has Lord Byron, by chance, moulded his character on an old ballad-hero, as he had tuned his lyre to the old style of the poets of the XVth century ?

It is not impossible that the first idea of this ballad was borrowed from the tenth novel, tenth day of the Decameron. Griselda, put to the test by Gualtieri, might have furnished the character of Ellen, and the very name of *Waters* is but a form of that of *Gautier*. Between the two stories however, there exists the difference between English human nature and Italian human nature.

Before I take leave of the middle-ages, I

should advert to a circumstance which may not have escaped notice: I have not spoken of the authors who wrote in Latin during the seven or eight centuries of which we have just taken a survey. This formed no part of the plan I have laid down for myself, because, in fact, the Latin literature of the middle ages, and those which preceded them, equally belongs to the Europe of this period; whereas we are exclusively treating of the idiom or idioms peculiar to the English. Thus I have omitted all mention of Gildas in the sixth century, of Nennius Abbot of Bangor and of Aldhelm in the seventh; of Bede, Alcuin, Boniface Archbishop of Mentz and an Englishman, of Willebald, Eddius a monk of Canterbury, Dungal and Clement in the eighth; of Johannes Scotus, Erigena, of Asser author of the life of Alfred the Great, whose favourite he was, in the ninth; of St. Dunstan and Elfric the grammarian in the tenth; of Ingulph in the eleventh; of Laufranc, Anselm, Robert White, William of Malmsbury, Huntingdon, John of Salisbury, Peter de Blois, Gerard du Barry, in the twelfth and thirteenth; of Roger Bacon, Michael Scott, William Ockam, Mathew Paris, Thomas Wykes, Hemmingford, and Avesbury, in the thirteenth and fourteenth. Not but that the works of these writers are replete with matter of the high-

est curiosity for the study of history, of manners, of arts and sciences. It were much to be wished that we possessed translations of the principal productions of those authors.

Here ends the first part of this historical view. English literature purely oral, as it were, in its four first epochs, is rather spoken than written; handed down to posterity by means of a species of stenography, it has all the advantages and defects of improvisation; the poetry is simple, but incorrect; the history curious, but confined within a particular circle. We are now about to see the higher poetry stifling the familiar, and general history extinguishing petty history. This literary revolution is brought about by the gradual progress of civilisation, at a moment when a religious revolution is about to break up catholic unity and European society.

PART SECOND.

FIFTH AND LAST EPOCH

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

LITERATURE UNDER THE TUDORS.

ENGLISH poetry has, hitherto, appeared to us under catholic colours; the Vatican was the abode of the muses who sang beneath the half formed dome of St. Peter, erected for them by Michael Angelo; they are now on the eve of apostatizing and turning protestant. Their change of religion was not, however, felt in a very decided manner, for the Reformation took place before the language had emerged from its barbarism; all the writers of the first order made their appearance subsequently to the reign of Henry VIII. My observation relative to

Shakespeare, Pope, and Dryden will be seen hereafter.

Be this as it may, a chief feature pervades the epoch upon which we now enter; in the same manner as I portrayed the *middle age* to the reader, before I adverted to the authors of those times, it seems proper that I should preface the second part of this work by some enquiries on the subject of the Reformation. How was it brought about? what were its consequences to the human mind, to literature, to the arts, to governments? These are questions well worthy of our consideration.

HERESIES AND SCHISMS WHICH PRECEDED THE SCHISM OF LUTHER.

FROM the moment when the cross was planted at Jerusalem, attacks were unceasingly directed against the unity of the Church. The philosophies of the Hebrews, the Persians, the Indians, and the Egyptians, had become concentrated in Asia under the dominion of Rome; from this focus, kindled by the evangelic spark, issued that torrent of opinions as various as the manners of the heresiarchs were dissimilar. It were easy to draw up a catalogue of the philosophic systems, and place, in juxta-position to each, its corresponding heresy. Tertullian acknowledged that heresies were to christianity what philosophic systems were to paganism, with this difference, that philosophic systems were the truths of pagan worship, whereas heresies were the errors of the christian religion.

St. Augustine reckoned, in his time, eighty-eight heresies, beginning with the Simonians and ending with the Pelagians.

The church withstood the attacks of all; her perpetual struggle accounts for those councils, synods, assemblies of every name and every species, which are noticed from the very dawn of christianity. Nothing is so wonderful as the indefatigable activity of the christian community: intent upon defending itself against the edicts of the emperors and against persecutions, it was moreover called upon to combat its own children and its domestic enemies. The very existence of the faith was, no doubt, at stake: had not heresies been constantly cut out of the bosom of the church by canons, denounced and stigmatized in writings, the people would have been at a loss to understand to what religion they belonged. In the midst of sects propagating themselves unopposed, and assuming endless ramifications, the christian principle would have been exhausted in its numberless derivations, as a river is lost in the multitude of its channels.

The middle ages, properly so called, were not free from schism. Several innovators in Italy, Wicliff in England, Jerome of Prague and John Huss in Germany, were precursors of the reformers of the sixteenth century. A multitude of heresies were at the bottom of those doctrines, which gave rise to the frightful crusades against the unfortunate Albigenses. In the very schools

of theology a spirit of curiosity shook the dogmas of the church; the questions at issue were by turns obscene, impious, and childish.

In the tenth century, Valfrede raised his voice against the resurrection of the body. Béranger explained, in his own way, the mystery of the eucharist. The errors of Roscelius, Abelard, Gilbert de la Porée, Peter Lombard, and Peter of Poitiers, acquired celebrity. It was asked if Jesus Christ, as man, was anything; those who denied it were called *Nihilianists*. At length the scriptures were wholly set aside, and arguments in proof of the christian truths were drawn solely from the doctrine of Aristotle. Scholastic divinity reigned paramount, and William of Auxerre was the first to resort to the terms *materia* and *forma*, applied to the doctrine of the sacraments. Heloise enquired of Abelard why quadrupeds and birds were the only animals brought to Adam to receive their names from him. Was Jesus Christ, between his death and resurrection, what he had been before his death and after his resurrection? was his glorified body seated or standing in heaven? was his body, which is eaten in the eucharist, naked or clothed?—Such were the questions which engaged the most orthodox minds; and Luther himself was less audacious in his investigations.

SATIRES against the clergy, mixed with the well-grounded reproaches to which the priesthood had rendered themselves liable, kept pace, at all times, as I have elsewhere remarked, with heresies against the church; on this point, also, Luther fell short of his predecessors. The shepherds had become as depraved as their flocks. Whosoever desires to probe the interior workings of society in those days, should read the councils and the *charters of abolition* (letters of grace conceded by the sovereigns); in these are laid bare the wounds of society: the councils incessantly renew their complaints against the looseness of morals; the *charters of abolition* record the details of sentences and the crimes that gave rise to the royal letters. The capitularies of Charlemagne and of his successors are filled with enactments for the reform of the clergy.

The frightful story of the priest Anastasius being entombed alive with a corpse, through the

revengeful spirit of the Bishop Caulin is well known (Gregory of Tours). We read in the canons added to the first council of Tours, under the episcopacy of St. Perpert: "We have been told, horrible to relate, *(quod nefas)* that public-houses were established in churches, and that the spot which should be exclusively devoted to prayer and to the praise of God, echoes with the sound of noisy feasts, obscene language, disputes and wranglings."

Baronius, so favourably disposed towards the court of Rome, calls the tenth century the age of iron, such was then the depravity prevailing in the church. The distinguished and learned Gherbert, before he became pope by the name of Sylvester II., and when only archbishop of Rheims, said: "Deplorable Rome, thou once affordedst to our ancestors the most dazzling lights; but now we only derive from thee the most frightful darkness . . . . We have beheld John Octavian conspiring, in the midst of a thousand prostitutes, against the very Otho whom he had proclaimed emperor. He is overthrown, and Leo the Neophyte succeeds him. Otho withdraws from Rome, and Octavian enters it; he drives away Leo, cuts off the fingers, hands, and nose, of John the deacon, and, after putting to death many distinguished personages,

soon perishes himself. Can it still be possible to assert that so great a number of priests of the Almighty, worthy by their lives and their merits of enlightening the world, should submit to such monsters, destitute of all knowledge of divine and human sciences?"

St. Bernard evinces as little indulgence for the vices of his age; St. Louis was compelled to overlook the dissoluteness and disorders prevailing in his army. During the reign of Philip the Fair, a council was convoked for the express purpose of applying a remedy to the depravation of morals. In 1351, the prelates and mendicant orders laid their mutual grievances before Clement VII., at Avignon. This pope, who was favourable to the monks, rebuked the prelates in the following language: "Will ye speak of humility, ye who are so vain and pompous in your horses and equipages? will ye speak of poverty, ye who are so rapacious that all the benefices in the world would not satisfy your cravings? what shall I say of your chastity? . . . Ye hate mendicants, ye close your doors against them, whilst your houses are thrown open to sycophants and persons of scandalous lives *(leonibus et truffatoribus)*."

Simony was general; priests every where violated the rule of celibacy; they lived with

abandoned women, concubines, and servant-maids; an abbot of Noreïs had eighteen children. In Biscay, no priests were admitted unless they had their gossips, in other words, wives, supposed to be legitimate.

Petrarch writes to a friend: "Avignon has become a hell, the sink of every abomination. The houses, the palaces, the churches, the thrones of the pontiff and the cardinals, the air, the earth, everything is impregnated with falsehood; a future world, the last judgment, the punishments of hell, the joys of paradise, are held in the light of absurd and childish fables." In support of these assertions, Petrarch quotes certain scandalous anecdotes respecting the debauchery of the cardinals.

In a sermon preached before the pope, in 1364, Doctor Nicholas Orem proved, by six arguments, deduced from the disregard of the Christian doctrine, the pride of the prelates, the tyranny of the heads of the church, and their aversion for truth, that Antichrist would not be long before he made his appearance.

These reproaches, handed down from age to age, were revived by Erasmus and Rabelais. All the world was struck with those vices, which a power long uncontrolled, and the rudeness of the middle ages, had introduced into the church.

Kings no longer submitted to the papal yoke; the long schism of the fourteenth century had attracted the attention of the multitude to the disorders and ambition of the pontifical government; the bulls were torn in pieces and burnt by order of the magistrates; the very councils were intent upon the means of correcting abuses.

Thus, when Luther appeared, the reformation was in every mind; he culled a fruit which was ripe and ready to drop. Let us, however, consider who this Luther was; he will naturally lead us to Henry VIII., for he is connected with this monarch by his religious innovations, and by his quarrels with the founder of the English church.

LUTHER.

MARTIN LUTHER, the creator of a religion of princes and gentlemen, was the son of a peasant. He tells his own story in a few words, with that impudent humility which springs from the success of a whole life.*

"I have often conversed with Melanchton, and related to him the minutest details of my life. I am the son of a peasant; my father, grandfather, and great grandfather, were mere peasants. My father had removed to Mansfeld, where he became a miner. I was born there. That I should in after-life graduate as a bachelor, a doctor, &c., was not in my destiny. Have I not surprised many people by becoming a monk? and afterwards by exchanging the brown cowl for one of another kind? This greatly distressed

* What I am about to relate of Luther is chiefly extracted from the work lately published by M. Michelet, under the title of *Mémoires de Luther*.

my father, who fell ill in consequence. I next fell to loggerheads with the Pope: married a nun who had run away from a convent, and have had many children by her. Who could ever have read this in the stars? Who could have foretold that such things were to happen?"

Born at Eisleben, on the 10th of November, 1483, sent at the early age of six years to the school at Eisenach, Luther earned his bread by singing from door to door. "I also," said he, "was a poor beggar, and have received bread at the doors of houses." Ursula Schweickard, a charitable lady, took pity on him, and paid for his education; in 1501 he entered the university of Erfurt. A poor and obscure boy, he opened that new era which commences with him, an era which so many changes and calamities were to render imperishable in the memory of men.

Luther at first devoted himself to the study of the law; but he conceived an aversion for it, and turned to theology, music, and literature; in his presence one of his companions was struck dead by lightning; he then vowed to St. Anne that he would turn monk, and on the night of the 17th July, 1505, he entered the Augustine convent at Erfurt: he shut himself up in a cloister with a Plautus and a Virgil, to change

the christian world. Two years afterwards he was ordained a priest. " When I said my first mass I was half dead with fright, for I had no faith; next came weariness, temptations, and doubts." Luther, with a view to strengthen his belief, travelled to Rome.

There he found incredulity seated on the tomb of St. Peter, and paganism revived in the Vatican. Julius II., with a helmet on his head, dreamt only of battles; and the cardinals, ciceronians in their language, were transformed into poets, diplomatists, and warriors. Ready to turn Ghibeline, papacy had, without being itself aware of it, abdicated the temporal authority; the Pope, by becoming a prince in the style of other princes, had ceased to be the representative of the christian republic; he had relinquished the fearful office of Tribune of Nations, with which the popular election had formerly invested him. This escaped Luther's observation; he only took the narrow view of things; and returned to Germany, being merely struck with the scandal exhibited by the atheism and corrupt morals of the court of Rome.

Julius II. was succeeded by Leo X., Luther's rival; the pope and the monk divided the age between them; Leo X. imparted to it his name, and Luther his power.

The pope was desirous of completing the church of St. Peter; money was wanting for this object. Destitute of that faith which rendered the middle ages lavish of their treasures, Rome called to mind the days when christianity contributed by its alms to the erection of cathedrals and abbeys. Leo X. authorised the Dominicans to sell in Germany the indulgences, the distribution of which was formerly confided to the order of Augustines. Luther, having become provincial vicar of the Augustines, declaimed against the abuse of these indulgences. He addressed himself to the Bishop of Brandenburg and the Archbishop of Mentz: he obtained only an evasive answer from the former; the latter made no reply. He then publicly promulgated the theses, which he proposed to maintain against indulgences. Germany was shaken: Tetzel burned Luther's propositions; the students of Wittemberg burnt the propositions of Tetzel. Astounded at his own success, Luther would willingly have retraced his steps.

Leo X. heard from afar a clamour springing up beyond the Alps, and arising amongst barbarians. "A quarrel between monks," said Leo. The Athenians despised the barbarians of Macedonia. The predilection of the prince of the church for literature prevailed over

loftier considerations; Brother Luther, in his opinion, was gifted with "a noble genius." *Fra Martino haveva un bellissimo ingenio.* Nevertheless, in order to humour his theologians, he summoned this noble genius to Rome.*

Strong in the support of the Elector of Saxony, Luther evaded this command. Cited to Augsburg, he repaired thither with a safe-conduct from the emperor. He engaged in a disputation with Caetano de Vio, the pope's legate; they did not understand, they never understood, one another, in these contests of words. Luther appealed to the pope, who was better informed; he acknowledges that, had the legate evinced less haughtiness towards him, he would have yielded, because at this time *he possessed but a faint knowledge of the pope's errors.*

Leo X. solicited the Elector of Saxony to deliver Luther into his hands: Frederick refused. Luther feeling more secure wrote to the pope as follows: "I take God and men to witness, it never was my desire, neither do I now feel at all inclined, to shake the Roman church, or your holy authority. I fully acknowledge that this church is above all, that nothing should be preferred to it of what is in heaven and upon earth, save and except our Lord Jesus Christ."

* Bandello.

Luther was sincere, though appearances were against him; for, whilst he thus explained himself to the pope, he said to Spalatin: "I know not if the pope be not Antichrist, or the apostle of Antichrist." Shortly afterwards, he published his book on the *Babylonish Captivity*, therein declaring that the church is in thraldom, Christ profaned in the idolatry of the mass, disowned in the dogma of transubstantiation, and a prisoner to the pope.

Striving to prove that his attacks were directed much more against papacy than against the pope, he said in a second letter to Leo: "It is but just, however, much honored father, that, for once, I should bear thee in remembrance. Thy fame, so much lauded by literary men, thy irreproachable life, would raise thee above all attacks. I am not so foolish as to complain of thee, when all agree in thy praise. I have called thee a Daniel in Babylon; I have protested thy innocence... Yes, dear Leo, thou recallest to my mind Daniel in the den, Ezekiel amidst the scorpions. What couldst thou do single-handed against these monsters? We may add to thee three or four learned and virtuous cardinals. You would infallibly be poisoned, were you to attempt a remedy for such crying evils. The days of the court of Rome are numbered."

Upwards of three centuries have elapsed since Luther ventured this prediction; and the court of Rome is still in existence.

The monk's letters found Leo X. engaged with Michael Angelo in the construction of St. Peter's, and writing to Raphael: "You will do honour to my pontificate." "*Leon X.,*" said Palavicini, "*con maggior cura chiamò coloro a cui fosser note le favole della Grecia e le delizie de' poeti, che l'istoria della chiesa, è la dottrina de' Padri.*"

The Germanic croakings of Luther were impatiently borne by the Medicis, in the midst of the fine arts and under the pure sky of Italy. With a view to stifle those troublesome murmurs, and unwilling to believe in the danger of a schism, Leo drew up the bull of condemnation.

No sooner did the bull reach Germany, than the people mutinied; at Erfurt it was thrown into the river, and it was publicly burnt at Wittemberg: this proved the first spark of a conflagration which was to spread from Europe to every corner of the earth.

We are here presented with a noble struggle between Luther and himself, for, I repeat it, Luther yielded to his conviction. This struggle is ably portrayed in the work of M. Michelet, allowance being made for the translation which must unavoidably and of necessity clothe the

literature and ideas in the language of modern literature and the ideas of the present age.

In the opening of his treatise *de Servo arbitrio*, Luther says to Erasmus:

"You doubtless feel somewhat abashed in the presence of so numerous an assemblage of learned men, before the assent of so many ages, illustrated by men so well versed in the sacred writings, which gave birth to such great martyrs, and were glorified by such numerous miracles. Add to these the more modern theologians, so many academies, councils, bishops, and pontiffs. On that side are arrayed learning, genius, numbers, greatness, elevation, strength, holiness, miracles; what not besides? On mine, Wickliff and Lorenzo Valla (Augustin likewise, though you forget him), then Luther; a poor man, born but yesterday, standing alone, with a few friends who neither have learning, genius, numbers, greatness, sanctity, nor morals to lay claim to: their combined efforts could not cure a lame horse....."

In this treatise *de Servo arbitrio*, Luther advocates grace against free will; the man who extended, if he did not establish, the principle of *free enquiry* chained down the will of man; these

contradictions are natural to us. There is, besides, no direct connection between providential fatality and social despotism; they are two distinct orders of facts, the one appertaining to the domain of philosophy and theory, the other coming under the jurisdiction of politics and practice.

Germany is the country of integrity, genius, and reveries. The more unintelligible the abstractions of hazy minds, the greater is the enthusiasm of those dreamers, who fancy they understand them. Luther's countrymen adopted the revived opinions of St. Augustin as their rule of faith. Luther more especially courted the nobility. He dedicated to the Lord Fabian de Feilitzsch his defence of the condemned articles: "May this writing plead in my favour with you and with all your nobility." He published his pamphlet: *To the Christian Nobility of Germany, on the improvement of Christianity.* The chief nobles who patronized Luther, were Silvester von Schauenberg, Franz von Sickingen, Taubenheim, and Ulrich von Hütten. The Margrave of Brandenburg solicited the favour of seeing the new apostle. Thus it is that in France, as well as in England, the reformers were kings, princes, and nobles: in France, the sister of Francis I. Jeanne d'Albret, Henry IV.,

the Châtillons, the Bouillons, the Rohans; in England, Henry VIII., his bishops, and his court.

When I expressed this opinion, in the *Etudes historiques*, I had the misfortune to wound, contrary to my intention, many susceptible minds; I acknowledge that, in these our days of democracy, it is perhaps painful for those who claim to be the founders of popular liberty to find themselves, in their origin, *aristocrats*, descended from a race of princes and nobles: how can I help it? I have strictly adhered to the truth; a mass of undeniable facts might be adduced in support of it.

The diet of Worms was the triumph of Luther: he appeared at it before the Emperor Charles V., six electors, an archduke, two landgraves, twenty-seven dukes, a great number of counts, archbishops, and bishops. He entered the city, mounted on a car, escorted by a hundred gentlemen, armed cap-a-pee. A hymn was sung before him; it was the *Marseilloise* of that day:

Notre Dieu est une forteresse,
Une épée et une bonne armure.*

The people had ascended to the house-tops to

* Mr. Heine; *Revue des deux Mondes. Note by the Author.* It does not appear whether the author here quotes the authority of Heine for the fact or the sentiment. Be this as it

see Martin pass. Firm and moderate at the same time, the Doctor would retract nothing that he had asserted concerning doctrines, but he offered to disavow any unpleasant personality which might have escaped him. Thus, as it has been noticed by M. Mignet in a remarkable manner, Luther said *no* to the pope, *no* to the emperor. This affords evidence of conviction and of courage; that courage, however, so easy to assume when a person is well defended, when he is surrounded by a great display, when he is stimulated by the ambition of becoming the leader of a sect, and by the hope of distinguished fame. For the rest, all the sectarians have said *no*. The heresy of Arius lasted upwards of three centuries in full vigour, and is not yet extinguished; it divided the civilized world, and, with the exception of the Franks under Clovis, it exercised full sway over the Barbarian world: Alaric and Genseric, who sacked catholic Rome, were both Arians. Arius had said *no* long before Luther, whose doctrines have not yet attained the age of those of the priest of Alexandria.

may, what must be thought of that taste which can characterize Luther's noble hymn,

Ein feſter Burg iſt unſer Gott,

as the *Marseilloise* of the time of the great Reformer!—

Translator.

Luther was encouraged in the very bosom of the diet; nobles and counts had visited him. "The pope," says Luther, "had written to the emperor, recommending him not to observe the safe-conduct. The bishops urged him to this course; but the princes and states would not give their consent, which would have excited a serious commotion. I drew a signal advantage from all this; *they must have had more apprehension of me than I had of them.* In fact, the landgrave of Hesse, a prince still in the prime of life, requested to hear me, called upon me, conversed with and at last said to me; 'My dear Doctor, if you are right, may the Lord God protect you!'"

Be this as it may, Luther's appearance at the diet indicated some strength of mind, since John Huss, in spite of the emperor's passport, had been burnt alive. When Christ appeared before Pilate, he was alone, even abandoned by his twelve apostles; all the powers of earth were arrayed against him, and no regard was paid to the safe-conduct with which Heaven itself had provided him.

The diet published the imperial ban; it was launched at Luther and his adherents. Voltaire pretends that Charles V. hesitated between the monk of Erfurt and Rome. The act of the ban

maintained the validity of the safe-conduct. The same Charles V., who granted a solemn audience to Luther, refused to hear Fernando Cortes.

The reformer withdrew; with a view to remove him from all danger, and perhaps by previous concert with Martin himself, the elector of Saxony had him carried off and confined in the castle of Wartburg. From this fortress Luther sent forth a multitude of writings, thus following the example of Athanasius, who, from the recesses of the grottoes of Egypt, still contended for the faith. Temptations assailed him; *his unsubdued flesh consumed him with a devouring fire.* In his Patmos (such was the name given by this second St. John to the castle of Wartburg), he fancied that he heard, at night, nuts shaking in a sack, and a loud noise on the steps of a staircase, guarded by a chain and an iron gate. This was a return of apostacy. Rendered uncontrollable by this friendly captivity, which imparted to him the semblance of a martyr, Luther spoke of nothing but *rooting up the cedars, of humbling the proud and hardened Pharaohs.* He wrote in harsh language to the Archbishop of Mentz, thus dating his letter—"Written in my desert, on the Sunday after St. Catherine, the 25th November, 1521." The Cardinal-Arch-

bishop of Mentz, humbly or proudly replied: "Dear Doctor, I have received your letter; I cheerfully bear a fraternal and christian reprimand."

When preaching his new gospel, Martin said: "I hope they may slay me; but my hour is not come; I must still further exasperate that race of vipers." He at first hesitates to condemn monastic vows; then, fortifying himself in his opinions, he declares that he has formed "a vigorous conspiracy to destroy and annihilate them."

He disapproved of the democratic theologians who trod in his footsteps, and waged war against images. "If you desire," he wrote to Melanchthon, "to bring them to the test, inquire if they have felt those spiritual throes and divine births, those deaths and those hells."

He had begun to publish his translation of the Bible; it was prohibited by princes and bishops; as a sectarian and an author he grew impatient; anger supplied him with an anticipation of the future. "The people are stirring on all sides, and have their eyes open; they no longer will, they no longer can, suffer oppression. It is the Lord who brings all this about, and shuts the eyes of princes to these threatening symptoms; he it is who will consummate everything through

their blindness and violence; methinks I behold Germany weltering in blood.

"Let them be well assured that the sword of civil war is suspended over their heads."

Who was it then, but Luther, who suspended the sword of civil war over the heads of those princes?

In the same year, 1522, Henry VIII., then orthodox in his opinions, sent forth to the world the book to which I shall hereafter advert, which he had caused to be prepared, or perhaps corrected, by his chaplain and his theological ministers. The reforming monk abuses his colleague the reforming monarch. "Who is, then, this Henry, this new Thomist, this disciple of the monster, that I should respect his blasphemies and his violence? He is the defender of the church; yes, of his own church, which he so highly extols, of that prostitute clothed in scarlet, drunk with debauchéries, of that mother of fornications. As for me, Christ is my chief; I shall level, at one blow, that church and its defender, who are but one; I shall dash them to atoms." Unable to burn Luther, Henry VIII. replied; his faggots were more formidable than his writings.

The reformation was gaining ground by the aid of printing, which seemed to have been dis-

covered just in time for the propagation of the new doctrines; the Lutheran church was establishing itself; what it has rejected and preserved of the dogmas of the Roman church is a matter of general notoriety. But the spirit of schism crept from all quarters into the new communion; Calvin appeared at Geneva; Luther was falling out with Carlostadt, and writing bitter pamphlets against him. The peasantry rose against their lords, and invaded the property of the ecclesiastical princes; hence the disturbances in Swabia, Frankfort, Baden, Alsace, the Palatinate, Hesse, and Bavaria. In vain Luther exerted his utmost endeavours to disarm the mob; in vain he exclaimed that revolt never could come to a prosperous end; that whosoever wields the sword shall perish by the sword. The sword was drawn; it was not to return to its scabbard until after two centuries of sacrifices.

In Luther's reply to the twelve articles drawn up by the peasantry of Swabia, some rational and just observations are to be found: he likewise tells the lords certain truths, which may have appeared bold to them; but, carried away by the character of his reformation, which was hostile to the people, he evinces a revolting harshness towards the peasantry; he does not bestow a single tear upon their misfortunes.

" I am of opinion," said he, " that, rather than the princes and magistrates, every peasant should perish, because the peasants take up arms without divine authority .... No mercy, no tolerance, is due to peasants, but the indignation of God and men .... The peasants are under the ban of God and the emperor. One is justified in treating them like mad dogs."

Nevertheless, those *mad dogs* had been let loose by the language of Luther. In respect of these men, placed *under the ban of God*, the emancipator of the human mind evinces no sympathy for popular liberties.

He fell out with all the sectaries who emanated from his reformation, and never forgave Erasmus for his *liberum arbitrium*.

" So soon as I may be restored to health, I intend, with the blessing of God, to write against and crush him. We have permitted him to deride and to collar us; now, however, that he would presume to act in the same manner towards Christ, we have resolved to oppose him .... To crush Erasmus, is, no doubt, like crushing a bug; but my Christ, whom he derides, is of more consequence to me than the peril of Erasmus.

" If I live, I hope by the help of God, to cleanse the church of his filth. He it is who

has sown and produced Crotus, Egranus, Witzeln, Œcolampadius, Campanus, and other visionaries or epicureans. Be it known that I will no longer admit him to be of the church."

"When he preaches, his language sounds as false as a cracked vessel. He has attacked popery, and now he raises his head out of the sack."

Erasmus and Luther had long been friends, and were both considered as heretics.

"These," as it it is justly remarked by M. Nisard, "are slight questions for the advocates of historical fatalism, who swell and elevate a man for every act done after his time, through causes which he neither could have willed nor foreseen; but I no longer find them so unsuited to the present day. At that time, in fact, which of them left more substantial matters for posterity—Luther denying free-will, and replacing one dogma by another, or to speak more plainly, one superstition by another, or Erasmus claiming for man liberty of conscience?*

The Turks having laid siege to Vienna, Luther nobly summoned the Germans to the defence of their country. The leagues of Smalkald, the anabaptists of Munster, followed in succession.

† De Nisard. Erasmus, 2nd part. *Revue des deux Mondes.* 15 September, 1835.

The latter preached against the pope and against Luther; they even preferred the first to the second; they considered Luther as the friend of the nobility, and they cursed him as he had cursed the Swabian peasantry.

LUTHER owed to his opinions a step which was the natural consequence and effect of them. He had thrown open the cloisters, thence sallied forth a crowd of men and women whom he was at a loss to dispose of; he accordingly married, as much to set them a good example as to rid himself of his temptations. Whosoever infringes prescribed rules endeavours to draw the weak along with him, and to take shelter behind the multitude. People hope, by this assent of the many, to convey a belief in the justness and lawfulness of an act which was often the result of mere accident or of a thoughtless passion. Holy vows were doubly violated; Luther married a nun. All this may perhaps be consistent with nature, but there exists a loftier nature; however exemplary may be the virtues of a married couple, they can scarcely inspire confidence and respect when taking the conjugal oath at that

altar where their vows of chastity and solitude had been pronounced. Never will a christian pour into the bosom of a priest the concealed burden of his life, if that priest owns any other spouse than that mysterious church, which preserves the secret of errors inviolate, and administers consolation to sorrow. Christ, at once a pontiff and a victim, lived in celibacy, and he quitted the earth at the close of his youth."

The nun whom Luther took to wife was named Catherine de Bora; he loved her, lived in harmony with her, and laboured with his own hands for her support. He who made princes, and deprived the clergy of its wealth, remained a poor man; like our early revolutionists, he gloried in his indigence. We read in his will these affecting words:

"I declare that we have neither ready money, nor property of any kind. This is not to be wondered at, if it be considered that we possess no other revenue than my salary and a few presents."

In his domestic life and his private opinions, Luther inspires us with interest. He has many noble ideas respecting nature, the Bible, schools, education, faith, and laws. His remarks on the press excite our curiosity; an individual idea leads him to a general truth and to an insight into futurity.

"The press is the last and the supreme gift, the *summum et postremum donum*, by means of which the Almighty promotes the things of the Gospel. It is the last blaze that bursts forth before the extinction of the world. Thanks be to God, we at last behold its splendour."

Let us listen to Luther in the privacy of his domestic feelings:

"This child (his son) and all that belongs to me, is hated by their adherents, hated of the whole host of devils. Nevertheless, this child is not disconcerted by his enemies, he is not disturbed at so many and such powerful lords bearing him so much ill-will; he gaily sucks the breast, looks around with a loud laugh, and lets them snarl to their hearts' content."

Speaking again of his children in another place, he says:

"Such would have been our thoughts in paradise, simple and unaffected; innocent, free from malignity and hypocrisy, we should have been, in very truth, like this child, when he speaks of God, and feels so assured of him.

"What must have been Abraham's feelings, when he consented to sacrifice and slaughter his only son? Assuredly he never said a word on the subject to Sarah."

The last trait possesses a character of familia-

rity and tenderness bordering upon the sublime. He deplores the death of his infant daughter, Elizabeth :

" Elizabeth, my little girl, is dead. Strange to say, her loss has left me a sick heart, a woman's heart, so intense is my sorrow. I never could have imagined that a father could feel so much tenderness for his child.

" Her features, her words, her gestures during life and on her death-bed are deeply engraved in my heart. Oh my obedient and dutiful daughter! the very death of Christ (and what in comparison are all other deaths,) cannot, as it should, drive her from my memory.

" Think, however, dearest Catherine, whither she is gone. She has assuredly finished a happy journey. The flesh, no doubt, bleeds ; such is its nature ; but the spirit lives and finds itself at ease. Children dispute not ! they believe as they are taught ; all in children is pure simplicity. Their death is free from cares and anguish ; they have no doubts, no temptations, at the approach of death, no bodily pain ; they but fall asleep as it were."

When we read such tender, such religious, such affecting sentiments, our anger is appeased, we forget the fierceness of the sectary.

The death of his father inspired him with

these words, of biblical depth and simplicity:

"I succeed to his name; now am I, for my family, the *old Luther*. It is now my turn, my right to follow him through death."

When Luther became ill and sad at heart, he said:

"The empire falls, monarchs fall, priests fall, the whole world totters, as the approaching fall of a large mansion is announced by little lizards."

Luther's was a peaceful death; he wished to die, and said:

"May our Lord soon come and take me away! may he come, above all, with his last judgment; I am prepared to hold out my neck; let him hurl the thunderbolt, and may rest be my portion!"

"Shame upon us! we do not give the tithe of our lives to God; and we presumptuously hope to deserve heaven by one good work! What have I myself done?"

* * * * *

"This little bird has chosen its place of shelter, and will sleep undisturbed; it has no uneasiness, never dreams of to-morrow's home; it remains quietly perched on its little branch, and leaves the care of itself to God.

"I recommend my soul to thee, oh my Lord Jesus Christ! About to quit this terrestrial body, and to be cut off from this life, I know that I shall rest for ever near thee."

He again thrice repeated: *In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Domine, Deus veritatis.* On a sudden, he closed his eyes and fainted away. Count Albert and his wife, as well as the medical attendants, employed all possible means to bring him to himself; with much difficulty they succeeded. Doctor Jonas then said to him: "Reverend father, do you die true to the faith you have taught? He answered by a distinct *yes,* and again fell asleep. He soon grew pale, became cold, breathed deeply once more, and expired.*

* Extract from the "Narrative of Jonas and Cœbius," in M. Michelet's work.

THERE was the final *yes* which followed the *no* pronounced at Worms. Yes, Luther persisted, as did also the sects which originated in him; but his refusal of all accommodation with those sects is a proof that he was not aware of the drift of the movement he had brought about. Thus it was that, in the presence of the landgrave of Hesse, he would yield nothing to Zuinglius, Bucer, and Œcolampadius, who besought him to come to an arrangement with them; they would have given him Switzerland and the banks of the Rhine; thus it was that he blamed Melanchton, who attempted to effect, between catholics and protestants, a reconciliation similar to that which Bossuet endeavoured to negotiate with Leibnitz; thus it was that he condemned the peasants of Swabia and the anabaptists of Munster, far less on account of the disorders of which they had been guilty,

than because they would not remain within the circle which he had marked out for them A man of gigantic conceptions, who aimed at changing the face of the world, would have soared above his own opinions; he would not have fettered those minds which aimed at the destruction of what he also pretended to destroy. Luther was the first obstacle to Luther's reformation.

The reformer was not, assuredly, deficient in spirit; after all, however, he did not display that commanding courage which so many martyrs and enthusiasts evinced in behalf of the catholic religion and of heresies; he was neither the invincible Arius, nor the indomitable John Huss; he only exposed himself on one occasion; thenceforward kept in the back-ground, vents the loudest threats from afar, boasts that he will brave every danger, but confronts none. He refuses to repair to the diet of Augsburg, and prudently remains shut up in the fortress of Coburg. He often says that he is *alone*, that he is about to descend from his Sinai, his Sion; but he remains there. When he spoke thus, so far from being *alone*, he was behind the dukes of Mecklenburg and Brunswick, behind the grand-master of the Teutonic Order, behind the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse; before him

was the conflagration he had kindled, and none could get at him through this blazing barricade.

Let us be just towards Luther; he was a man of genius and imagination, a writer, a poet, a musician, and, moreover, a very worthy man. He has fixed the German prose upon a solid basis; his translation of the Bible, incorrect from his imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew, has stood the test of time: his psalms, composed after the Holy Scriptures, are still sung in the Lutheran churches. He was a disinterested man; a good husband, a tender father; setting aside the marriage between a monk and a nun. We discover in him that candid and genuine German nature, replete with the purest feelings of humanity, and inspiring confidence at first sight; but we also find in Luther that German coarseness, those virtues and talents, which are still inspired at the present day by that *false Bacchus*, accursed by another reformer, Julian the Apostate.

Luther was sincere; he only fell into schism after long struggles; after expressing his doubts, almost his remorse, he retains the temptations of the cloister. A susceptible man, who turns monk because a friend of his was struck dead by lightning in his presence, may well throw off the cowl upon witnessing the sale of indulgences;

this is not to be ascribed to profound views or lofty ideas. Luther seriously fancied himself assaulted by the devil; he struggled against him during the night, till the sweat covered his brow; *multas noctes mihi satis amarentulas et acerbas reddere ille novit.* When he was over tormented by the evil spirit, he put him to flight by uttering three words, which I cannot venture to repeat, but which may be read in the curious extracts in Mr. Michelet's work.* Christ had spoken to Satan a different language; he had merely said to him: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Occasionally, in his exaltation of mind, Luther fancied himself possessed by the Divinity, shook off his own individuality, and exclaimed, "I don't know Luther. The devil take Luther."

Luther's eloquence was not of the choicest kind; and, when speaking of the pope, the Lama is too present to his mind. His doctrine in favour of the great is as relaxed as his eloquence is at times of a foul character; he almost admits polygamy, and allowed the landgrave of Hesse to have two wives. If he had not rejected the papal authority, he might have supported himself by a decretal of Pope Gregory II. in 762.

* *Mémoires de Luther*, vol. iii. p. 186.

PORTRAIT OF LUTHER BY MAIMBOURG, BOSSUET, AND VOLTAIRE.

THE justice done to Luther by catholic writers and priests, in the portraits they have drawn of him, must be recorded to their honour.

" He was a man of lively and subtle mind," says Father Maimbourg in his rather antiquated style, " eloquent by nature, copious and polished in his language, very laborious, and so addicted to study, that it occasionally engaged his whole day, without his even affording himself leisure to take nourishment; by this means he acquired tolerable proficiency in languages and in the writings of the fathers, to the perusal of which, and especially of St. Augustine, whom he turned to so bad an account, he was much addicted, contrary to the practice of the theologians of his day. His strong and robust constitution was calculated to bear him through his studies, without impairing his health; he was of a bilious

and sanguine habit of body; his eye was penetrating and full of fire; the sound of his voice was agreeable, and very loud when he was once excited; he was of a proud, bold, and haughty deportment, which he could soften down at command, in order to personate an humble, modest, and subdued spirit, which was, however, of rare occurrence. Such is the true character of Martin Luther, who may be said to have combined in his person a remarkable admixture of some good and many bad qualities, and who was far more debauched in mind than in morals and in his private life, which was generally free from reproach."

Bossuet has drawn so impartial a portrait of Luther, that it might almost be deemed too flattering.

"The two parties who share the reformation between them, have alike acknowledged him as their author. The highest praises have been bestowed upon him by others, besides the Lutherans, his immediate sectaries; Calvin often admires his virtues, his magnanimity, his constancy, the rare ingenuity he displayed in his attacks against the pope; he is the trumpet, or rather the thunderbolt; a thunderbolt which has

awakened the world from its lethargy: it was not Luther who spoke; it was God who dealt his blows through Luther's mouth. He possessed, no doubt, great strength of genius, great powers of speech, a vivid and impetuous eloquence, which engaged and delighted his hearers; extraordinary boldness, when he found himself backed and applauded, and an air of authority which made his disciples tremble in his presence, so that they dared not contradict him in trifles any more than in important matters. It was not the people alone who considered Luther as a prophet; he was represented as such by the initiated of his party. Melanchton, who placed himself under his guidance at the commencement of these altercations, allowed himself at first to be so persuaded that there was something extraordinary and prophetic in this man, that he could not for a long time recover from his astonishment. In spite of the many defects which he daily discovered in his master; he wrote to Erasmus, in reference to Luther: *Prophets, you are aware, should be brought to the test, and not despised.* Nevertheless, this new prophet gave way to the most violent excesses of passion. He overstrained every thing; because prophets, at the bidding of God, uttered awful invectives, he became the most violent of men, the most

prolific in outrageous language. Luther spoke of himself in a manner to raise a blush among his friends. Proud of his knowledge, which was in reality slender, though great for the time in which he lived, and too great for his salvation and for the repose of the church, he placed himself above all men, not only those of his own, but of the most distinguished by-gone ages. It must be acknowledged that he possessed much strength of mind; nothing was wanting to him but that rule of conduct which can only be found in the church, and under the sway of legitimate authority. Had Luther remained under this sway, so indispensible for all minds to submit to, and especially for fiery and impetuous minds, such as he possessed; could he have retrenched from his speeches his transports of violence, his scurrility, his brutal insolence; the strength with which he handles the truth would not have been wielded for the purposes of seduction. Accordingly, we still find him invincible, when he comments upon the ancient dogmas which he had drawn from the church; pride, however, was an unfailing attendant upon his triumphs."

Voltaire, *the patriarch of incredulity*, has been less lenient to Luther than the Jesuit Maimbourg

and the Bishop of Meaux, had proved themselves.

"We cannot," said he, "resist a smile of pity, when we read of the manner in which Luther treated all his adversaries, and the pope in particular: "Petty popekin, you are an ass, an ass's colt; go gently; the ground is slippery; you might break your legs, and people would say: 'What the devil can this be? The little colt of a pope has broken its legs. An ass knows itself to be an ass; a stone that it is stone; but these little asses of popes are not aware that they are asses.'"

These scoffings of Voltaire are just; but they tell for nothing.

THE intellectual movement effected by Luther did not emanate from his genius: he had no genius. It must be remembered that the term genius, in the time of Bossuet, did not bear the signification which is now attached to it. Luther, I have already observed, was merely a man of considerable intelligence and considerable imagination. He yielded to the irascibility of his temper, without comprehending the revolution which he was accomplishing, and which he himself impeded by obstinately seeking to concentrate it in his own person. He would have failed, like all his predecessors, if the spoils of the clergy had not tempted the cupidity of power.

Since the event, people have systematized the reformation: it is the character of our age to systematize every thing, folly, meanness, and crime. We give the mind credit for crimes and acts of baseness with which it has had no relation, and which are merely the offspring of vile

instinct or brutal irregularity: we may fancy we discover genius in the appetite of a tiger. Hence those high-sounding phrases, those maxims upon stilts, which pass for wise, and which, passing from history or romance into vulgar language, enter into the commerce of paltry villany, of assassins who commit murder for a silver cup or the tattered gown of a poor woman.

It has been affirmed that free investigation was the constitutive principle of the reformation. In the first place, it is necessary to understand what is meant by *free investigation*. Free investigation of what? Of religion, or of philosophic ideas? These subjects had long been discussed without restraint. Is it the *free investigation* of social questions; of civil liberty? Certainly not! And this I shall prove in the succeeding chapter.

It is even doubtful whether *free investigation* in matters of religion really accelerated the anti-christian revolution, which is the fundamental idea of those with whom this free investigation is the favourite doctrine. Bayle, who cannot be suspected on this subject, makes the following just and profound observation: "It is certain that the number of those who were luke-warm, indifferent, or disgusted with christianity, was diminished much more than augmented by the

troubles which agitated Europe on the occasion of Luther. Every one enthusiastically sided with one party or the other. Some remained in the Roman communion; others embraced protestantism. The former conceived for their communion more zeal than they had previously cherished; the latter were all ardour for their new faith. One cannot calculate the numbers, who, according to the testimony of Coeffeteau, relinquished christianity on witnessing so many disputes."

If it be said that, within a given time, the *free investigation of religious truth* introduced, as a deduction or corollary, the *free investigation of political truth;* if it be said, with Voltaire, " it was not till after Luther's time that the laity dogmatized;" I readily admit it. But these consequences were brought about by the natural progress of civilization; and we had no need of the horrors of the League, the massacres in Ireland and Scotland, the murders of the German peasantry, the civil wars of Switzerland, and the thirty years' war. These torrents of blood, instead of accelerating the advance of the human mind, have checked its progress for the space of two centuries. The horrors of 1793 will retard, for an incalculable period, the emancipation of mankind. The reformation originated

simply in the haughty rage of a monk and the avidity of princes. The changes which had taken place in laws and manners during a century preceding the reformation led of necessity to changes in religious worship. Luther came at the right time; and that is all. He is an example of that reputation which chance and circumstances sometimes confer on men of very ordinary ability. I may here quote another judicious remark of Bayle's. "Wickliffe, and several others, had not less talent or less merit than Luther; but they attempted the cure of the disease before it reached its crisis."

Berington, in his "Literary History of the Middle Ages," says, as I have stated, that all necessary reforms would have been obtained without the infliction of so many misfortunes. Alluding to England, he says: "It is pleasing to recollect that, without civil or religious strife, and without those seeds of animosity being engendered, which no time is likely to eradicate, we should have seen abuses corrected; ignorance dispelled; rights maintained; learning restored; the arts keeping possession of our temples; and, in our own country, these noble edifices, the monuments of the generous piety of our ancestors, preserved from destruction, and made the asylums not of monkish indolence,

but of studious ease, modest worth, and christian philosophy."

Protestantism may justly lay claim to virtues; but it is not much honoured in its founders: Luther, the apostate monk, the approver of the massacre of the peasantry; Calvin, the splenetic doctor, who burnt Servetus; Henry VIII., the revisor of the Missal, and who put seventy-two thousand persons to a cruel death; these are the three Christs of protestantism.

But, putting the workman out of the question and considering only the work, there are truths which it would be unjust to deny. The reformation, by opening modern ages, separated them from the undefined interval which succeeded the termination of what are called the middle ages. It awakened ideas of ancient equality. It served to metamorphose a society exclusively military into a civil, rational, and industrious society. It gave birth to the modern property of capital; a moveable, progressive, and unlimited property, which opposes the limited, fixed, and despotic property of land. This is an immense benefit. But it is mixed up with much evil; and this evil historical impartiality will not permit us to pass over in silence.

Christianity commenced among the plebeian, poor, and ignorant classes of mankind. Jesus addressed himself to the lowly, and they rallied

round their master. Faith gradually ascended to the upper ranks, and at length found its way to the imperial throne. Christianity was thus catholic or universal. The religion styled catholic set out from the lowest, and finally reached the highest step of the social ladder. The popedom was only the tribunate of nations, when the *political age* of christianity arrived.

Protestantism followed an opposite course. It was first introduced among the heads of the body politic; among princes and nobles, priests and magistrates, scholars and men of letters, and it slowly descended to the inferior conditions of life. The impress of these two origins remains distinctly marked in the two communions.

The reformed communion has never been so popular as the catholic faith. Being of princely and patrician origin, it does not sympathise with the multitude. Protestantism is equitable and moral, punctual in the discharge of duty; but its charity partakes more of reason than of tenderness; it clothes the naked, but does not warm them in its bosom; it shelters the poor beneath its wings, but does not dwell and weep with them in their most abject haunts; it relieves but does not feel for misfortune. The monk and the priest are the companions of the poor man; poor like himself, they have for their companions the

bowels of Jesus Christ. Rags, straw, disease, and dungeons excite in them no disgust, no repugnance; charity imparts a perfume to indigence and misery. The catholic priest is the successor of the twelve lowly men who preached Christ raised from the dead; he blesses the body of the deceased beggar, as the sacred remains of a being beloved by God, and raised to eternal life. The protestant pastor forsakes the beggar on his death-bed; to him the grave is not an object of religious veneration; he has no faith in those expiatory prayers, by which a friend may deliver a suffering soul. In this world the minister does not rush into the midst of flames or pestilence; he reserves to his own family that affectionate care which the priest of Rome bestows on the great human family.

In a religious point of view, the reformation is leading insensibly to indifference, or the complete absence of faith; the reason is that the independence of the mind terminates in two gulfs, —doubt and incredulity.

By a very natural reaction, the reformation at its birth rekindled the dying flame of catholic fanaticism. It may thus be regarded as the indirect cause of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, the disturbances of the League, the assassination of Henry IV, the murders in Ireland, and of

the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and the *dragonnades*. Protestantism exclaimed against the intolerance of Rome, whilst she was murdering catholics in England and France, and scattering their ashes to the winds; whilst she was kindling piles in Geneva, sullying herself with the atrocities of Munster, and dictating to Ireland the atrocious laws from which that country is scarcely yet released, after three centuries of oppression. What improvement is it pretended that the reformation wrought in doctrine and discipline? It boasts of the reasonableness of denying some mysteries of the catholic faith, whilst it retains others quite as difficult of comprehension. It attacked the abuses of the court of Rome; but would not those abuses have been destroyed by the progress of civilization? Have I not shewn that a general outcry had been long raised against those abuses?

The reformation, imbued with the spirit of its founder, declared itself hostile to the arts. It sacked tombs, churches, and monuments, and made in France and England heaps of ruins. By retrenching imagination from the faculties of man, it clipped the wings of genius, and compelled it to walk on foot. It burst forth on account of alms destined to erect for the christian

world the church of St. Peter. Would the Greeks have refused the appeal to their piety, if solicited for the means of erecting a temple to Minerva?

Had the reformation in its origin obtained complete success, it would have established, at least for a time, another kind of barbarism. Treating as superstition the pomp of the altar, as idolatry the masterpieces of sculpture, architecture, and painting, the reformation would have tended to banish the loftiest style of eloquence and poetry; to deteriorate taste by the repudiation of models; to imbue the mind with all that is cold, dry, doctrinal and punctilious; to substitute unaffected and material for a natural and intellectual state of society; to employ machinery and wheel-work instead of manual and mental operation. The operation of a single fact suffices to confirm these truths.

In the various branches of the reformed religion, that communion approximates more or less to the beautiful in proportion as it is more or less removed from the catholic religion. In England, where the ecclesiastical hierarchy has been maintained, literature has had its classic era. Lutheranism preserves sparks of imagination, which Calvinism would extinguish; and so with the other sects, descending to the quakers, who would reduce social life to coarseness

of manners and the practice of handicraft trades.

Shakspeare, according to all probability, if he was anything, was a catholic. Pope and Dryden were of that faith. Milton has imitated some parts of the poems of St. Avitus and Masenius; and Klopstock borrowed most of the Roman points of belief. In Germany, in our own time, imagination did not take a lofty flight until the spirit of protestantism was enfeebled and perverted. Göthe and Schiller have exercised their genius on catholic subjects. In French literature, Rousseau and Madame de Staël form brilliant exceptions to the rule. But were they protestants after the manner of the first disciples of Calvin? Painters, architects, and sculptors of the dissenting sects now repair to Rome in quest of that inspiration which universal tolerance permits them to imbibe.

But I need not speak of Europe only; the whole world is covered with monuments of the catholic religion. We are indebted to it for that Gothic architecture, which rivals in details and eclipses in grandeur the monuments of Greece. It is now more than three centuries since protestantism had its birth. It is powerful in England, Germany, and America; it is the religion of many millions of men. What has it created?

It may point to the ruins it has made, and amidst which it has planted a few gardens and established some manufactures; rebelling against the authority of tradition, the experience of time past, and the wisdom of old age, protestantism detached itself from the past, and planted a society without roots; acknowledging as his father a German monk of the sixteenth century, the protestant renounced the splendid genealogy which the catholic is enabled to trace through a line of saints and heroes to Jesus Christ, and from Him to the patriarchs and the infancy of the world. The protestant age renounced at its birth all relationship with the age of St. Leo, who defended the civilized world against Attila, or with the age of the Leo who, terminating the barbarous world, embellished society when it was no longer necessary to defend it.

If the reformation restricted genius in poetry, eloquence, and the arts, it also checked heroism in war, for heroism is imagination in the military order. Catholicism had produced the knights of the ages of chivalry. Protestantism created brave and virtuous captains, such as La Noue; but devoid of enthusiasm, Falkland excepted; often coldly cruel and austere, less perhaps so in manners than in mind. The Chatillons were always eclipsed by the Guises. Henry IV, the

only warrior of true spirit and enthusiasm whom the protestants count in their communion, escaped them. The reformation produced those imperfect heroes, Gustavus-Adolphus, Charles XII, and Frederick; but it could not have created a Bonaparte. Though it may lay claim to such abortions as Tillotson and Claude, it could not give birth to a Fénélon or a Bossuet. It produced Inigo Jones and Webb, but not Raphael and Michael Angelo.

Writers have affirmed, that protestantism has proved favourable to political liberty; and it has emancipated nations. But do facts speak like writers?

It is certain that the Reformation was at its birth republican, but in the aristocratic sense, because its first disciples were gentlemen. The calvinists dreamt of establishing in France a sort of government composed of federal principalities, which would have made it like the Germanic empire. It would have been singular enough to have seen feudal issue revived by protestantism. The nobles instinctively embraced the new faith, through which was transmitted a sort of reminiscence of their vanished power. But, this first fervour having passed away, the people gained no political liberty by protestantism.

Look for example to the north of Europe: in those countries in which the reformation had its birth, and in which it has been continued, the mere will of the sovereign is the law. Prussia and Saxony have remained under the sway of absolute monarchy; Denmark has become a legal despotism.

Protestantism never gained a footing under republican governments. It did not gain access to the elective and republican monarchy of Poland; it was unable to invade Genoa; it scarcely succeeded in establishing in Venice and Ferrara a little clandestine church, which speedily perished. The fine arts and the bright sun of the south were fatal to it.

In Switzerland it prospered only in the aristocratic cantons, which were congenial to its nature, and there not without a great effusion of blood. The popular or demo cratic cantons, Schwytz, Uri, and Unterwalden, the cradle of Helvetic liberty, expelled it.

In England, it was not the vehicle of the constitution, which was formed long before the 16th century in the lap of the catholic faith. When Great Britain separated from the court of Rome, the parliment had already judged and deposed kings;—the three powers were distinct; —taxes and troops were levied only by consent

of the Lords and Commons;—representative monarchy was established and in operation: time, civilization, and the progress of knowledge would have conferred the improvements which were wanting, as effectually under the influence of the catholic faith, as under the dominion of protestantism. So far were the English people from gaining an extension of their liberties by the overthrow of the religion of their fathers, that the Senate of Tiberius was never more vile than was the parliament of Henry VIII: that parliament decreed that the mere will of the tyrant, who was the founder of the English church, should have the authority of law. Was England more free under the sceptre of Elizabeth than under that of Mary? The truth is, that protestantism has never operated any change in national institutions. Wherever it found a representative monarchy, or aristocratic republics, as in England or Switzerland, it adopted them: wherever it found military governments, as in the north of Europe, it accommodated itself to them and rendered them more absolute.

Though the English colonies have formed the plebeian republic of the United States, yet those States do not owe their liberty to protestantism. They were not emancipated by religious wars; they rebelled against the oppression of the

mother country, which, like themselves, was protestant. Maryland, a catholic and very populous state, made common cause with the others, and now most of the western states are catholic. The progress of this communion in the United States of America exceeds belief. There it has been invigorated in its evangelical aliment, popular liberty, whilst other communions decline in profound indifference.

Next to this great republic of the protestant English colonies have arisen the great republics of the catholic Spanish colonies. In the struggle for independence, the latter certainly had greater obstacles to surmount than the Anglo-American colonies, which were accustomed to representative government, before they broke the feeble bond which attached them to the mother country.

One republic only has been established in Europe by the aid of protestantism, namely—the Dutch republic; but Holland was a part of those industrious provinces of the Netherlands, which for upwards of four centuries had struggled to shake off the yoke of their princes, and governed themselves under the form of municipal republics, though peopled by zealous catholics. Philip II and the princes of the house of Austria could not extinguish the spirit of

independence in Belgium; and in our own time it was the catholic priests who, for a brief interval, restored that country to the republican form of government.

There is only one branch of Lutheranism that has been political, and that is the Calvinistic branch, with its various ramifications, from the Anabaptist to the Socinian: yet this branch never did any thing for popular liberty. In France, the disciples of Calvinism were priests and nobles. If, in Scotland, Knox and Buchanan preached the sovereignty of the people, the Jesuit Mariana, la Boetie, and Baudin promulgated the same doctrines among the catholics. Milton, the enemy of those protestant kings, whom however, he could not prevent from re-ascending the throne, was also the partizan of *aristocratic republicanism*, and the great adversary of equality and democracy.

An attentive examination of facts must lead to the conclusion that protestantism has not promoted popular freedom. It has given to mankind philosophic liberty, but not political liberty. Now the former liberty, has nowhere led to the attainment of the latter, except in France, the true land of catholicism. How happens it that Germany, naturally philosophic, and already armed with protestantism, has not

advanced a single step towards political liberty in the eighteenth century, whilst France, of not very philosophic temperament, and under the yoke of catholicism, gained during that century all her liberties.

Descartes, the founder of a system of sceptical investigation, the author of the *Méthode* and the *Méditations*, the destroyer of scholastic dogmatism—Descartes who maintained that to arrive at truth it was necessary to reject all received opinions—Descartes was tolerated in Rome, pensioned by Cardinal Mazarin and persecuted by the theologians of Holland.

The man of theory has a sovereign contempt for that which is practical. He looks down from the height of his lofty doctrine, judges men and things, meditates on the general laws of society, directs his bold enquiries even into the mysteries of the divine nature, and feels and thinks himself independent because only his body is chained. To think every thing, and do nothing, is at once the character and the virtue of philosophic genius. The philosopher wishes to see mankind happy. The sight of liberty charms him; but he does not care to see it through two windows of a prison. Like Socrates, Protestantism may be said to have called minds into existence; but unfortunately

the intelligences which it has ushered into life have hitherto been only beautiful slaves.

Be it observed, however, that most of these reflexions on the Reformed religion are intended to apply only to the past: the protestants of the present day are not, any more than the catholics, what they formerly were. The protestants have gained in imagination, in poetry, in eloquence, in reason, in liberty, and in genuine piety, what the latter have lost. The antipathies between the different communions no longer exist. The children of Christ, from whatever line they spring, unite at the foot of Mount Calvary, the common birth-place of the family. The litenciousness and the ambition of the court of Rome have ceased; and the Vatican is now distinguished by the virtues of the early Bishops, patronage of the arts, and the majesty of recollections. Every thing now tends to restore catholic unity; with a few concessions on either side, concord would soon be established. To be enabled to shine forth in renewed glory, christianity wants only a superior genius, coming at the proper time and place. The christian religion is entering upon a new era: like institutions and manners it is undergoing the third transformation. It is ceasing to be political, according to the old social mechanism; it is advancing to the great principle

of the Gospel: natural democratic equality between man and man, as it is acknowledged before God. Its flexible circle extends with knowledge and liberty, whilst the cross for ever marks its immoveable centre.

COMMENCEMENT OF PROTESTANT LITERATURE.

KNOX. BUCHANAN.

When once a route is opened, men will be found ready to enter upon it. Henry VIII speedily followed Luther. By establishing the most barbarous of religions and political tyrannies, he proved how much the Reformation favoured independence of opinion and liberty.

Though I have affirmed that the beautiful in literature will be found to exist in a greater or less degree in proportion as writers have approximated to the genius of the Roman church, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that the change of religion was succeeded by an immediate improvement in English literature. But why? Because the Reformation took place before

the language emerged from barbarism. All the great English writers appeared after the reign of Henry VIII.

But if the innovations in religion, on account of the period at which they were introduced, did not establish a very visible line of demarcation in the ascending scale of literature, they traced a very deep line in the descending scale. The Reformation may be said to have severed the literature of Europe into two parts, which maintained a rivalry, and frequently an hostility, one to the other.

The examination and comparison of catholic and protestant literature, from the period of the division of ideas by the schism, would be a work useful to taste, curious to criticism, and calculated to throw a philosophic light on the history of the human mind. The literature of England, Scotland, Germany, Holland and calvinistic France, is not like the literature of that portion of France which remained faithful to her altars, nor like the literature of Spain and Italy. What would Milton, Addison, Hume, and Robertson have been if catholics? What would Racine, Bossuet, Massillon, and Bourdaloue have been if Protestants? These two opposite styles of literature have acted and reacted one upon the other. The eloquence of the pulpit, for example, has changed its course since the Reformation: the

pastors have preached morality and the priests dogma. The latter appeared to be intent only on defending themselves, harassed between Luther who pursued them and Voltaire who advanced to attack them face to face. The protestants went too far; the catholics have not gone far enough.

Politics and philosophy incroached upon the literature of the Reformation. That literature became formal and argumentative. Knox, an apostate Scottish priest, drew tears from the unfortunate Mary Stuart by his menacing fanaticism: he published *The First Sound of the Trumpet against Female Government*, and established the dogma of the sovereignty of the people in religious and political matters: *plebis est religionem reformare: principes ob justas causas deponi possunt*, &c. The Bishop of Luçon, afterwards Cardinal Richelieu, refuted the principles of Knox in a controversial work. "Your party," said he "have written that, by right divine and human it is permitted to take the lives of impious kings; that it is a thing conformable to the word of God, that a private man may by special instinct kill a tyrant. But this is a detestable doctrine, in every point of view, and will never gain admittance into the catholic Church."

Buchanan unfolded the same principles as Knox in his Treatise *De Jure Regni apud Scotos.* Knox and Buchanan lived at the commencement of the Reformation. They were the friends of Calvin and Theodore de Beza; the latter were contemporaries of Henry VIII, and both had written as catholics before they wrote as protestants. Knox was a priest, Buchanan was the domestic preceptor of Montaigne. It may be seen in the prose writings of the former, and in the poetry of the latter, how the new doctrines modified their genius.

THE same metamorphosis of style and ideas may be seen in the writings of Henry VIII. How widely different are the "Institutions of a Christian Man," and the "Erudition of a Christian Name," from the *Assertio septem Sacramentorum*, a treatise, which Hume observes "does no discredit to his capacity." The Apostle King, in his impartiality, burned a Lutheran and a Catholic together.

We have seen how the anger of Luther was provoked by the work of Henry VIII. It is a fact scarcely known at the present day that the *Assertio* passed through a vast number of editions. It was published in 1521, and forty years afterwards (in the year 1562) it was reprinted in Paris. It is preceded by a dedication from the *Invincible* Henry to Pope Leo X. Henry beseeches his Holiness to pardon him for having,

young as he was, amidst the occupation of arms and the various duties of the throne, ventured to defend religion; but he could not without indignation see holy things attacked and heresy flow in from all sides. He adds that he sends his work to the true judge, in order that he may correct any errors which he shall find in it.

The meek and benign sovereign next addresses his readers. He assures them that, without eloquence or learning, and prompted solely by fidelity and piety towards his mother church, the spouse of Christ, he has ventured to combat for her. He asks them if ever such a pestilence (the Lutheran doctrine) was spread among the flock of the Lord; if ever the serpent had such a poison as that distilled by the book on the captivity of Babylon?

Then entering upon his subject, he says a few words on indulgences, and supports the belief in purgatory. He places Luther in opposition to himself, and declares that he falsifies the New Testament. He establishes, by the authority of the Canons and by historical tradition, the universal power of Popedom, and he argues in favour of the seven sacraments. On the subject of the Eucharist, he replies to the objection against *water*, that if the catholic church mixes water with wine in the chalice, it is

because blood and water flowed from the side of the dying Saviour: *quia aqua cum sanguine de latere morientis effluxit.* Finally, in his peroration, he implores all Christians to unite against Luther, as they would unite against Turks, Saracens, and all infidels.

Doctor Martin was irritated, and insulted Doctor Henry; and the latter addressed a letter to his cousin the Duke of Saxony. The duke lectured Luther, and the monk consented to write a more moderate letter to the king. In his letter, dated Wittenberg 1525, the repentant reformer states, that his indignation was not excited against his sovereign, but against the wretches, who presumed to promulgate a libel under the name of an august monarch, hopes that the king will be pleased to send him a mild and benign reply, and subscribes himself "your Royal Majesty's very humble servant, Martin Luther, signed with my own hand."

Henry, in his reply, excuses himself for not having earlier answered Luther's letter, which had been carried out of the way. He again tells the new apostle that his errors and heresies are scandalous; that his erudition and his arguments, which are neither well grounded, nor well maintained, prove a degree of perverse

impudence. "If thou be truly penitent Luther," says the king, "throw not thyself at my feet, but at the feet of God."

The king, who was the husband of six wives, who sent two queens to the scaffold, who turned monks and nuns out of their convents, who founded a church in which the clergy were permitted to marry and monastic vows were abolished, thus addressed Luther: "Send back to the cloister the wretched woman *(muliercula)* the adulterous spouse of Christ, with whom thou livest under the name of husband, in scandalous debauchery and double damnation. Pass the rest of thy days in tears and repentance for the multitude of thy sins. Return to thy monastery; there thou mayest recant thine errors, and, by the salvation of thy soul, redeem thy body from perils. There, lamenting thy pestilential heresies, and dissolute errors, implore the divine mercy, not with arrogant confidence, not by a gesture, a word, or a publican spirit, but with persevering penitence. Alter and amend thy ways; till then I shall be afflicted, thou wilt be lost, and through thee, wretched man, a multitude will perish."

That nothing might be wanting to complete this farce, Leo X conferred on Henry VIII the title of *Defender of the Faith*, which has been

borne by the protestant kings of England almost to the present day. In the Vatican, there was once a harp, which an Irish chieftain sent to the holy see in token of vassalage. Leo X sent it to the *Defender of the Faith* in order to infief Ireland to the crown of Great Britain. Ireland could not be offended at being given as a harp, when the investiture of Rome herself, was made by a short episcopal mantle: *prefecturæ Romanæ investum fiebat per mantum* (Decret. Innoc. III. L. I). If Henry VIII could have laid hands on Luther, there would certainly have been one reformer less in Europe.

It must not be forgotten that, whilst Henry VIII was declared *Defender of the Faith* by the court of Rome, Luther was elected Pope in one of the chapels of the Vatican, by the Lutheran soldiers of the catholic Charles V.

History presents many curious spectacles: but can any be more extraordinary than the dispute between Luther and Henry VIII, when we consider the characters of these two champions, and the revolution which they effected. Such are the instructors of nations, the anchorites of the rock, the austere children of the learned deserts of a modern Thebais, to whom men of reason, learning, and virtue, have submitted their consciences and their genius! How strangely is mankind led!

HENRY VIII CONTINUED.

HENRY VIII wrote poetry as well as prose. He played on the flute and the spinett. He set to music ballads for his court and masses for his chapel, and he left behind him a motett, an anthem, and many scaffolds. He was certainly a troubadour of most imaginative genius. This man, who employed a wooden image of the Virgin as part of the materials for the pile at which the confessor of Catharine of Arragon was burnt;—who summoned before his tribunal the dead body of St. Thomas of Canterbury, tried it and condemned it to death, in spite of the legal maxim, *non bis in idem*; who caused faggots to be bound on the backs of five Dutch Anabaptists, and regaled his eyes with the spectacle of five moving *auto-da-fés.*; he had

a fine subject for a romantic sonnet when, from the summit of a solitary hill in Richmond Park, he saw the signal which was transmitted from the Tower of London, announcing the execution of Anne Boleyn. What delicious satisfaction he must have enjoyed at that moment! The axe had severed the delicate neck, and stained with blood the beautiful hair, on which the poet king had lavished his fatal caresses.

In the reign of Henry VIII we find Surrey and Thomas More. The Earl of Surrey released English poetry from the forms of the middle ages, and conferred on it the impress of the Italian style by composing sonnets to Geraldine in the manner of Petrarch. It is supposed by some that Geraldine was Elizabeth Fitzgerald; but others allege that she was the daughter of Lord Kildare. Be that as it may, the beautiful and beloved lady *once was*, and is now no more. Surrey, being in Florence, addressed a challenge to every christian, Jew, Moor, Turk, and cannibal, declaring that he, Surrey, would maintain against one or all the incomparable beauty of Geraldine. Petrarch sighed for Laura, but did not fight for her. The English of those days displayed their chivalry and their passions among those ruins to which they now carry only their fashions and their *ennui*.

On his return to England, Surrey was impri-

soned in Windsor Castle by the orthodox Henry VIII, for having eaten flesh during Lent.

"Here noble Surrey felt the sacred rage."
POPE.

The last victim of the first protestant King of Great Britain was the noble lover of Geraldine. The reforming prince proved his attachment to literature by dooming to the block Sir Thomas More, and the poet with whose writings the era of modern English poetry commences. In the Tower of London are preserved the axes which struck off many illustrious heads. The bit of iron survives moulds which comprised power and genius.

Surrey, in his translation of some fragments of the Æneid, introduced the blank verse which Milton and Thompson adopted, and which Lord Byron rejected.

Sir Thomas More, like his good king, was a poet and a prose writer. Most of his works are written in Latin. The head of the chancellor was exposed, for the space of a fortnight, on London Bridge. Henry VIII, in his clemency, commuted the punishment of hanging, to which the author of "Utopia" was condemned, to that of decapitation. On being informed of this, the learned magistrate replied: "Heaven preserve my friends from the like favour!"

Within an interval of twenty-five years, at the period here referred to, prose was less successfully cultivated than poetry. It would be difficult to derive either profit or pleasure from a perusal of the writings of Wolsey, Cranmer, Habington, Drummond, and Joseph Hall, the preacher.

EDWARD VI and Queen Mary, who succeeded Henry VIII, and preceded Elizabeth, must be included in the list of British authors. The young king died at the age of sixteen. He was educated by two scholars of the time, John Cheke and Anthony Cooke, and he likewise received instructions from Cardan. Edward left a journal written in his own hand, which is useful for the illustration of history. The young sovereign, whose life was spent in privacy, and as it were in exile, enjoyed the leisure which other princes find only when banished to foreign lands.

Edward was a zealous reformer, and his sister Mary was a violent catholic. She brought back the nation by force to the Roman communion. Gardiner and others, who burned catholics for the reformation, burned for catholicism the protestants whom they had made such: thus we see in political revolutions, old men, who have uniformly adhered to the ruling power, rallying their

energies to recount their own baseness. The commons prostituted themselves to the will of Mary, as they paid obedience to the commands of her father. People changed their faith oftener than their garments. They swore to one thing, and presently afterwards swore to directly the contrary; and at length, in the reign of Elizabeth, they returned to their first oaths. How many perjuries are required to make one fidelity!

Mary left behind her some Latin and French letters. Erasmus praised the former, but they are absolutely worthless; as to the latter, they are illegible.

THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH.

SPENSER.

FROM the time of Spenser the modern English poetry takes its date. The "Faerie Queene," is, as every one knows, an allegorical poem. The author has represented twelve private virtues, which are classed as in Ariosto. These virtues are transformed into knights, and King Arthur is at the head of the party. Gloriana, Queen of the Fairies, is Queen Elizabeth, and King Arthur is Sir Philip Sydney. Lord Buckhurst, in his "Mirrour for Magistrates," appears to have suggested the first idea of the "Faerie Queene." The form of Spenser's poem is modelled on that of the Orlando and Gerusalemme. Each canto consists of stanzas of nine lines. The six last cantos are wanting, excepting two fragments.

Allegory was in vogue in what was considered the elegant poetry of the middle ages. In the productions of that school we find Ladies' Loyalty,

Reason, and Prowess; Squire Desire, Sir Love, and the Chatelaine his mother; Emperor Pride, &c. What suggested these fancies to the poets of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries? Their classical education. They were trained up among the deities of antiquity, in a bygone world. The colleges sent forth men of subtile genius, who had no relation with the living world. Being christians, and therefore unable to avail themselves of the pagan divinities, they invented moral divinities. They invested these fanciful creations with the manners of chivalry, and mingled them with the inhabitants of fairy land; they introduced them to tournaments, to the castles of dukes and barons, and the courts of princes, always taking care to conduct them to Lisseux and Pontoise, where *le beau françois* was spoken.

The poetry of Spenser is remarkable for brilliant imagination, fertile invention, and flowing rhythm; yet with all these recommendations, it is cold and tedious. To the English reader the "Faerie Queene" presents the charm of antiquated style, which never fails to please us in our own language, but which we cannot appreciate in a foreign tongue.

Spenser commenced his poem in Ireland, in the castle of Kilcolman, situated in a grant of

three thousand and twenty-eight acres of land, part of the forfeited estates of the Earl of Desmond. There, seated at a hearth which was not his own, the rightful heirs to which were wandering in exile, he celebrated the hill of Mole, and the banks of the Mulla, without reflecting that the fugitive orphans were never to revisit their paternal haunts. The poet must have thought of the lines of Virgil :

> Nos patriæ fines et dulcia linquimus arva ;
> Nos patriam fugimus.

Spenser is the author of a sort of essay on the manners and antiquities of Ireland, which I prefer to his " Faerie Queene."

The English formerly traded in their children, and sold them ; this commerce was carried on to a great extent with Ireland. A council held at Armagh in 1117, by the Irish ecclesiastics, declared that, in order to avert the wrath of Jesus Christ, the enemy of servitude, the English slaves throughout the whole island should be restored to their former freedom. (See Wilkin Concil. vol. i.) How have the Irish been requited for this generous resolution of their ancestors ? But for them the period of the deliverance of Christ is at length arrived.

SHASKPEARE.

We now come to Shakspeare. Let us consider him at our leisure, as Montesquieu says of Alexander.

I quote from memory the titles of two pieces: *Every Man*, which was performed in the reign of Henry VIII., and *Gammer Gurton's* Needle performed in 1552. The dramatic authors contemporary with Shakspeare, were Robert Green, Heywood, Decker, Rowley, Peele, Chapman, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, and Fletcher: *jacet oratio!* Ben Jonson's plays, entitled the Fox, and the Alchymist, are still esteemed.

Spenser was the favourite poet of the reign of Elizabeth. The author of Macbeth, and Richard III. was eclipsed by the dazzling rays of the "Shepherd's Calendar," and the "Faerie Queene." Did Montmorency, Biron, and Sully, who were by turns ambassadors from France to the courts of Elizabeth and James I., ever hear

of a strolling actor, who performed sometimes in his own plays, and sometimes in those of other authors? Did they ever pronounce the name of Shakspeare, so barbarous to French ears? Did they ever suspect that there was around him a glory which would outlive their honours, their pomp, their rank? Yet the mountebank player, the representative of Hamlet's Ghost, was the great phantom, the shade of the middle age, who rose upon the world like the evening star, just at a moment when the middle age had sunk among the dead; that extraordinary interval which Dante opened, and which Shakspeare closed.*

Whitelocke, a contemporary of Milton, speaking in his "Historical Sketch" of the author of "Paradise Lost," designates him as "a certain blind man, named Milton, Latin Secretary to the Parliament." Moliere, the *player*, acted his own Pourceaugnac, as Shakspeare, the buffoon, personated his own Falstaff. The author of the *Tartufe*, the comrade of poor Mondorge, changed his illustrious name of *Poquelin* for the humble name of *Molière*, that he might not disgrace his father, the *Upholsterer*.

* The great dramatist himself spelt his name Shakspeare. The orthography Shakespeare has been, however, very generally adopted.

Avant qu'un peu de terre, obtenu par prière,
Pour jamais sous la tombe eût enfermé Molière,
Mille de ses beaux traits, aujourd'hui si vantés,
Furent des sots esprits à nos yeux rebutés.

Thus, the veiled travellers, who come from time to time, and seat themselves at our tables, are treated by us merely as common guests: we know not their immortal nature until the day of their disappearance. On quitting this world, they become transfigured, and say to us, as the messenger of heaven did to Tobias: "I am one of the seven, which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One."

These divinities, who are not recognised by mankind in their transitory passage through the world, are, nevertheless, recognizable to each other. Thus, Milton saw the glory of the Bard of Avon:

What needs my Shakspeare, for his honor'd bones,
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid
Under a starry-pointing pyramid?

Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,
Hast built thyself a live-long monument.

* * * * *
* * * * *

And, so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
That Kings, for such a tomb, would wish to die.

Michael Angelo, surveying the fate and the genius of Dante, exclaims:

Pur fuss' io tal * * *
Per l'aspro esilio suo con sua virtute,
Darei del mundo il più felice stato.

"Why have I not been such as he!....For his bitter exile, with his virtue, I would give all the enjoyments of the world."

Tasso celebrated Camoens when the author of the Lusiad was yet almost unknown, and proclaimed his renown before his name was re-echoed by Fame, with her hundred tongues.

Vasco * * * *
* * * * * *
* * * * buon Luigi
Tant 'oltre stende il glorioso volo,
Che i tuoi spalmati legni andar men lunge.

"Vasco....Camoens has taken such a glorious flight, that thy tarred ships have not been so far."

Can any thing be more beautiful than this association of illustrious equals, revealing themselves one to another as it were by signs, exchanging salutations, and conversing together in a language intelligible to themselves alone?

But what could Milton have thought of the prediction of good fortune to the Stuarts in the terrible drama of the Prince of Denmark? The apologist of the condemnation of Charles I. was

well enabled to prove how greatly *his* Shakspeare was mistaken. He might have applied to England the words of Hamlet: *Or ere the shoes were old, with which she followed the poor king's body.* The prophecy has been retrenched. The Stuarts have been banished from Hamlet, as they have disappeared from the world.

MY FORMER MISJUDGMENT OF SHAKSPEARE—MISTAKEN ADMIRERS OF THE POET.

I FORMERLY measured Shakspeare with the classic microscope. It is an excellent instrument for observing the ornaments of good or bad taste, the perfect or imperfect details; but it is unfit for the observation of the whole, as the focus of the lens bears only on a single point, and is incapable of embracing the entire surface. Dante, now one of the objects of my highest admiration, appeared to me in the same diminished perspective. I wished to find an epopee according to rules, in a free epic poem, including the history of the ideas, the knowledge, the faith, the men, and the events of a whole epoch; a monument similar to those cathedrals which bear the impress of the genius of past ages, and in which the elegance and truth of the details, equal the grandeur and majesty of the whole.

The classic school, which did not blend the lives of authors with their works, deprived itself of a powerful medium of appreciation. The banishment of Dante furnishes a key to his genius: when we follow the exile into the cloisters, where he *sought peace;* when we are present at the composition of his poems on the highways and in the various places to which he wandered; when we hear his last sigh breathed on a foreign land, do we not read with deeper interest the melancholy stanzas of the three destinies of man after death?

Let it be supposed that Homer never existed; that we read the lays of all Greece, instead of those of one of her sons; I can pardon the learned for this poetic heresy. Yet I should be very unwilling to lose any portion of the adventures of Homer. Yes; the poet must necessarily have played in his cradle with nine turtle-doves; his infantine prattle must have resembled the warbling of nine species of birds. Do you deny these incontestable facts? What then can you make of the cæstus of Venus? What signify anachronisms? I hold that the life of the father of fable was related by Herodotus the father of history. Why should I go to Chios and Smyrna, were it not to salute the school and the river of Melesigenes,

in spite of Wolf, Wood, Ilgen, Dugaz-Montbel, and the rest of them? Of all the traditions relating to the Bard of the Odyssey, I reject none save that which makes the poet a Dutchman. Genius of Greece, Genius of Homer, of Hesiod, of Æschylus, of Sophocles, of Euripides, of Sappho, of Simonides, and of Alcæus, continue to deceive us! I believe firmly in thy fictions. What thou tellest me is as true as it is that I have seen thee seated on Mount Hymettus, amidst the humming of bees, beneath the porch of a convent of Greek monks. Thou hast become christian, but hast, nevertheless, retained thy golden lyre, and thine azure wings, on which were traced the ruins of Athens!

However, if we formerly stopped too far short of the romantic, we may now be fairly accused of having gone too far beyond it. But this is a change common to French genius, which leaps from white to black, like the knight in a game of chess. The worst is, that our present enthusiasm for Shakspeare is excited less by his beauties than by his blemishes.

We applaud in him what we should condemn in others.

Are Shakspeare's mistaken admirers charmed with the traits of passion in Romeo and Juliet?

No truly! Did you not hear Mercutio say, of Romeo that he is "without his roe, like a dried herring?"

Does not Peter say to the musicians: "I will carry no crotchets: I'll *re* you, I'll *fa* you: do you *note* me?"

Such passages as these are declared to be the wondrous beauties of Shakspeare's dialogue: pure transcripts from the book of nature! What simplicity! What truth! What an accurate picture of the contrasts existing in life! What an able approximation of the various ranks, manners, and phraseologies of society!

I sometimes amuse myself by imagining Shakspeare's return to the world, and his indignation at your tasteless worshippers. How would he despise the adoration rendered to puerilities at which he would be the first to blush, though they are not his faults, but the faults of his age! He would regard, as incapable of appreciating his beauties, those who are enraptured with his defects, and above all those who coolly copy those defects in the midst of modern manners.

VOLTAIRE'S OPINION OF SHAKSPEARE. OPINION OF ENGLISH CRITICS.

VOLTAIRE was the first who made Shakspeare known in France. The first judgment he pronounced on the great English dramatist was, like most of his first judgments, marked by moderation, taste, and impartiality. In 1730 he thus wrote to Lord Bolingbroke :—

" With what pleasure have I witnessed in London the performance of your tragedy of Julius Cæsar, which for a hundred and fifty years has been the admiration of your countrymen."

Again he says :—

" Shakspeare created the English drama, his genius was powerful, fertile, natural, and sublime ; but he had not a spark of good taste,

or the least knowledge of rules. I will make a bold assertion, but a true one: it is, that the merit of Shakspeare has ruined the English drama. There are so many beautiful scenes, so many grand and terrible passages, scattered through his monstrous farces, called *tragedies*, that their performance has always been attended with great success."

Such were the first impressions which Shakspeare produced on Voltaire. But when it was attempted to set up that great genius as a model of perfection, when his writings were unblushingly pronounced to be superior to the master-pieces of the Greek and of the French drama,—then the author of Merope felt the danger. He saw that by exhibiting the beauties of Shakspeare, he had dazzled men who could not, like himself, separate the gold from the alloy. He was induced to retract; and he assailed the idol to whom he had himself offered incense. But it was too late, and he vainly repented having *opened the door to mediocrity*, *deified the drunken savage*, and *placed the monster on the altar*.

Shall we go further in our infatuation than our neighbours themselves? In theory, the English are unreserved admirers of Shakspeare:

but in pratice their zeal is much more circumspect. Why do they not act the plays of their deity in a perfect form? By what presumption do they venture to abridge, mutilate, alter, and transpose the scenes of Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, the Merchant of Venice, Richard III. etc.? Why have these sacrileges been committed by the most enlightened critics of the three kingdoms? Dryden observes that Shakspeare's language is out of date, and, conjointly with Davenant, he adapted his plays for performance. Shaftesbury declares that the style of the old bard is coarse and barbarous, that his expressions and his wit are alike antiquated. Pope remarks that Shakspeare wrote for the populace, without seeking to please persons of more refined taste: that his writings present to the critic materials at once the most agreeable and the most revolting. Tate appropriated to himself King Lear, which was then so completely forgotten that no one detected the plagiarism. Rowe too, in his life of Shakspeare, utters many blasphemies. Sherlock has ventured to say that there is nothing middling in Shakspeare; that all he has written is either detestable or excellent; that, he never kept to or even conceived a plot, though he frequently wrote very good scenes. Lansdowne carried

his impiety so far as to re-write the *Merchant of Venice*. Let us be on our guard against innocent mistakes. When we are thrown into ecstasies at a scene in the *dénouement* of Romeo and Juliet, we imagine that we are burning with pure love for Shakspeare, whilst in reality our ardent homage is addressed to Garrick.

Johnson, the great admirer of Shakspeare, and the restorer of his glory, observes that, with all his beauties, he has faults, and faults which would obscure the merits of any other writer than himself; that his effusions of passion, when the situation calls them forth, are for the most part striking and energetic: but that, when he puts his invention and his faculties to the rack, the fruits of his labour are bombast, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity. Johnson is of opinion, that, in narration, Shakspeare affects a disproportionate pomp of diction. His plays, he admits, contain scenes of sustained and undeniable excellence, but he adds that there is not a single one of Shakspeare's dramas, which if performed as the productions of a living author would be heard to the end.

Can we be better judges of an English writer than the celebrated Johnson? Yet, if any French critic were to make such bold assertions, would he not run the risk of being stoned? Might

not the severe Aristarchus be right, though he suspected certain enthusiasts of caressing their own deformities under those of Shakspeare?

What I have said respecting the changes which have occurred in the written and spoken language of England, and of the two periods when the Norman and the Italian encroached upon the Anglo-Saxon idiom, will enable the reader to form an idea of the compositions of the British Æschylus. His plays present a mixture of the subjects and styles of the north and the south. Into the subjects, which he borrowed from Italy, Shakspeare infused the natural tone of feeling peculiar to the Scandinavian and Caledonian nations. In his subjects taken from the northern legends, he has introduced the affectation of style common to the transalpine countries. Passing from the Scottish ballad to the Italian tale, he had nothing he could call his own but his genius; yet, with that noble gift of Heaven, he might well be content.

THE FAULTS OF SHAKSPEARE ARE THE FAULTS OF HIS AGE.

THE LANGUAGE OF SHAKSPEARE AND DANTE.

If it be unreasonable to hold up as worthy of imitation, in the works of Shakspeare, that which is stigmatised in other writers of the same epoch, it would likewise be unjust to attribute to the poet alone the faults of taste and diction common to the age in which he lived.

Thus we find a speaker of the House of Commons comparing Henry VIII to Solomon for justice and prudence; to Samson for strength and courage; and to Absalom for grace and beauty. Another orator in the same assembly declares to Queen Elizabeth that, among the greatest legislators, three females are included, viz: Queen Palestrina, before the Deluge; Queen Ceres, after; and Queen Mary, the mother of King Stilicus; Queen Elizabeth was to

be the fourth. King James I. spoke in the tragedy style when he informed his parliament, that he was the husband, and Great Britain his lawful wife;—that he was the head, and she the body;—and that England and Scotland, being two kingdoms in one and the same island, he, a Christian Prince, could not be accused of committing the crime of bigamy.

The *fine style*, which prevailed about the middle of the sixteenth century, was merely a flimsy, pedantic canvas, embroidered with high-flown sentences, plays upon words, and Italian *concetti*. Elizabeth was capable of giving her poet college lessons; she spoke Latin, composed Greek epigrams, translated the tragedies of Sophocles and the orations of Demosthenes. At her gallant, formal, quintessential, and reforming court, it was the fashion to interlard English conversation with French words, and to articulate so as to leave the sound doubtful, for the purpose of producing an equivoque in the sense.

In France, the same affectation prevailed. Ronsard was in his way a sort of Shakspeare, not by his genius, not by his Greek neologism, but by the forced turn of his phraseology. The Memoirs of the learned Marguerite, or *Margot*, de Valois, though in other respects so charming, are written in a metaphysical, sentimental

jargon, which but ill conceals very physical sensations. Half a century earlier, the sister of Francis I. had written tales, which have at least as much natural simplicity as those of Boccaccio

The *Guisiade* of Pierre Mathieu, a classic tragedy with choruses, on a national subject, reproduces the phraseology of Shakspeare: for example d'Epernon exclaims:

Venez mes compagnons, monstres abominables,
Jetez sur Blois l'horreur de vos traits effroyables.
Prenez pour mains des crocs, pour yeux des dards de feux,
Pour voix un gros canon, des serpents pour cheveux;
Changez Blois en enfer, apportez-y vos genes,
Vos roues, vos gibets, vos feux, vos fouets, vos peines.

Coligni, in the tragedy which bears his name, is made to utter the following:

O mânes noircissants ès enfers impiteux!
O mes chers compagnons, hé que je suis honteux
Qu'un enfant ait bridé mon effroyable audace;
Que me reste-t-il, chétif, pour hontoyer ma race,
Sinon que me cacher et du vilain licol,
De mes bourrelles mains hault estraindre mon col.

I may here offer a few remarks on two writers, who have often, and very improperly, been confounded together by critics of our own time, at once vague and systematic, who jumble

together indiscriminately ages, situations, talents, and recollections.

Shakspeare and Dante wrote under very dissimilar circumstances. The English dramatist found a language, not perfect it is true, but at least three-fourths formed, and which had already been employed by distinguished writers both in poetry and prose. This language had become a sort of barbarous and mannered dialect, grotesquely adorned and overcharged with foreign fashions. It may easily be imagined how much Shakspeare must have been annoyed when, in the midst of a vivid conception, he found himself obliged to introduce into his inspired language some affected foreign word. Conceive the colossus, thus obliged to force his feet into little Chinese slippers, struggling against impediments which he burst through like a lion breaking his chains.

Dante, who lived two centuries and a half before Shakspeare, entered upon a world in which he found nothing. The last remnants of the Roman society had expired, and had left behind a language, beautiful it is true, but of a dying beauty —a language unavailable for the purposes of common life, because it no longer expressed the character, the ideas, the manners, and the wants of the society which had newly sprung up. The

necessity of intelligible communication had given birth to a vulgar idiom, which was employed on both sides of the southern Alps, and on two declivities of the eastern Pyrenees. Dante adopted this bastard of Rome, whom the learned and the noble disdained to recognize. He found it wandering in the streets of Florence, fostered at hazard by a republican people, in plebeian and democratic rudeness. He communicated to the child of his choice his own manliness, his simplicity, his independence, his dignity, his melancholy, his holy sublimity, and his wild grace. Dante drew from nothing the interpreter of his talent; he gave being to the language of his genius; he himself constructed the lyre from which he drew forth his melodious strains, like those astronomers who invent instruments with which they measure the heavens. *Italian* and the *Divina Commedia* sprang at once from his brain. The illustrious exile simultaneously conferred on the human race a durable language and an immortal poem.

MECHANISM OF THE ENGLISH STAGE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

In the dramatic performances of Shakspeare's time, the female characters were represented by young men; and the actors were not distinguished from the spectators except by the plumes of feathers which adorned their hats, and the bows of ribbon which they wore in their shoes. There was no music between the acts. The place of performance was frequently the court-yard of an inn, and the windows which looked into this court-yard served for the boxes. On the representation of a tragedy in London, the place in which it was performed was hung with black, like the nave of a church at a funeral.

As to the means of illusion, some idea may be formed of them from the burlesque picture drawn by Shakspeare in the "Midsummer Night's Dream." A man, having his face smeared with plaster, is the wall which intervenes between Pyramus and Thisbe, and he spreads out

his fingers to represent the chinks in the wall through which the lovers converse. A lantern, a bush, and a dog, are employed to produce moonlight. In rude dramatic performances of this kind, the scene, without changing, alternately represented a flower-garden, a rock against which a ship was to strike, or a field of battle, where half a dozen miserable-looking soldiers would personate two armies. There is extant a curious inventory of the property of a company of English players; and in this document we find set down, a dragon, a wheel employed in the siege of London, a large horse with his legs, sundry limbs of Moors, four Turks' heads, and an iron mouth, which was probably employed in giving utterance to the sweetest and sublimest accents of the immortal poet. False skins were also employed for those characters who were flayed alive on the stage, like the prevaricating judge in Cambyses. Such a spectacle now-a-days would attract all Paris.

But, after all, correctness of scenic accessories and costume is far less essential to the illusion than is generally imagined. The genius of Racine gains nothing by the cut and form of a dress. In the masterpieces of Raphael, the back-grounds are neglected, and the costumes incorrect. The rage of Orestes or the prophecy of Joad recited

in a drawing-room by Talma, habited in his own dress, produced not less effect than when delivered by the great actor on the stage, in Grecian or Hebrew drapery. Iphigenia was attired like Madame de Sévigné, when Boileau addressed to his friend the following fine lines :

> Jamais Iphigénie, en Aulide immolée
> N'a coûté tant de pleurs à la Grèce assemblée,
> Que dans l'heureux spectacle à nos yeux étalé
> En a fait sous son nom verser la Chanmélé.

Accuracy in the representation of inanimate objects is the spirit of the literature and the arts of our time. It denotes the decay of the higher class of poetry and of the genuine drama. We are content with minor beauties when we cannot attain great aims. Our stage represents to perfection the chair and its velvet coverings, but the actor is not equally successful in portraying the character who is seated in the chair. But, having once descended to these minute representations of material objects, it cannot be dispensed with, for the public taste becomes materialized and demands it.

In Shakspeare's time, the higher class of spectators or the *gentlemen* took their places on the stage, seating themselves either on the

boards, or on stools which they paid for. The pit was a dark and dusty hole, in which the audience stood crowded together. The spectators in the pit and those on the stage were like two hostile camps drawn up face to face. The pit saluted the *gentlemen* with hisses, threw mud at them, and addressed to them insulting outcries. The *gentlemen* returned these compliments by calling their assailants *stinkards* and brutes. The *stinkards* ate apples and drank ale; the gentlemen played at cards and smoked tobacco, which was then recently introduced. It was the fashion for the gentlemen to tear up the cards, as if they had lost some great stake, and then to throw the fragments angrily on the stage, to laugh, speak loud, and turn their backs on the actors. In this manner were the tragedies of the great master received on their first production. John Bull threw apple-parings at the divinity at whose shrine he now offers adoration. Fortune, in her rigour to Shakspeare and Moliere, made them actors, and thus gave to the lowest of their countrymen the privilege of at once insulting the great men and their writings.

Shakspeare revived the dramatic art; Moliere brought it to perfection. Like two ancient philosophers, they divided between them the empire

of smiles and tears, and perhaps consoled themselves for the injustice of fate, the one by painting the absurdities and the other the sorrows of mankind.

SHAKSPEARE then is still admirable on account of the obstacles which he had to contend with. Never was so rare a genius obliged to avail himself of a language so faulty. Luckily, Shakspeare wanted what is termed learning, and this deficiency enabled him to escape one of the contagions of his age. Popular ballads, extracts from the History of England, collected from "Lord Buckhurst's Mirrour for Magistrates," French novels by Belleforest, and versions of the poets and tale-writers of Italy, composed his whole stock of literary erudition.

Ben Jonson, his rival, his admirer, and his detractor, was on the other hand a scholar. The fifty-two commentators on Shakspeare have industriously sought to discover all the translations of Latin authors which might have ex-

isted in his time. The only dramatic productions which I find in the catalogue are a Jocasta, taken from the Phœnissæ of Euripides, the Andria and the Eunuch of Terence, the Menechmes of Plautus, and the tragedies of Seneca. It is doubtful whether Shakspeare had any acquaintance with these translations; for he did not borrow the subjects of his plays from the originals *translated into English*, but from some English imitations of those same originals. This may be seen by Romeo and Juliet, the story of which Shakspeare did not take either from Girolamo de la Corte, or from the novel of Bandello; but from a little English poem entitled "The Tragical History of Romeo and Juliet." It is the same with Hamlet, the subject of which Shakspeare could not have taken immediately from Saxo Grammaticus.

The reformation, during the reign of Henry VIII., by banishing the *Miracles* and *Mysteries*, accelerated the revival of the drama beyond the circle of religious belief; and, had not Shakspeare found in Greek antiquity a stumbling-block, which he could not surmount, the classic style would have prevailed in English literature a century before its triumph in France.

In the opinion of Dr. Johnson, which may be

regarded as the opinion of the English in general, Shakspeare was more amply endowed with comic than with tragic genius. The great critic remarks, that in the most pathetic scenes the poet's humour gains possession of him; whilst in his comic scenes a serious thought never occurs. If we French can scarcely relish the *vis comica* of Falstaff, whilst we fully enter into the sorrow of Desdemona, it is because different nations have different modes of laughing and only one of weeping.

Tragic poets sometimes light upon the comic: but comic poets rarely rise to the tragic: this would imply that there is something more vast in the genius of Melpomene than in that of Thalia. He who can paint the suffering side of human nature can likewise represent the gay side; because he who can reach the greater can attain the less. Thus the painter who applies himself to humorous subjects lets the more exalted ones escape him, because the faculty of distinguishing small objects is almost always accompanied by the incapability of embracing great ones. There is but one comic poet who ranks on an equality with Sophocles and Corneille, and that is Molière. It is worthy of remark, that the comic humour of the *Tartufe*

and the *Misantrope*, by its extreme depth, and, if I may so express myself, by its *melancholy*, approximates to the seriousness of tragedy.

There are two modes of exciting laughter; the one is to exhibit faults first, and then to relieve them by good qualities. This sort of comic humour sometimes leads to the pathetic. The other mode consists in first bestowing praise, and then covering the object praised with so much ridicule that we cannot help relinquishing the esteem we had conceived for noble talents or exalted virtues. This sort of comic humour is the blighting *nihil mirari*.

The predominant characteristics of the founder of the English drama are nationality, eloquence, and observations, ideas, and maxims derived from knowledge of the human heart, and applicable to the various conditions of man. There is another remarkable quality which pervades the writings of Shakspeare, and that is the life which pervades them throughout. Some one compared the genius of Racine to the Apollo Belvedere, and the genius of Shakspeare to the equestrian statue of Philip IV. in Notre Dame. "Be it so," replied Diderot; "but what would you think were the wooden statue to draw down his helmet, shake his gantlets, brandish his sword, and prance about in the cathedral?" The

poet of Albion, endowed with creative power, animates even inanimate objects. The scenes, the stage, a branch of a tree, a blade of grass, the bones in a churchyard, all speak: under his magic touch there is nothing dead, not even death itself.

Shakspeare makes great use of contrasts: he loves to mingle diversions and acclamations of joy with funeral pomp and the wailings of grief. Thus, for example, the musicians summoned to the nuptials of Juliet, arrive just in time to attend her remains to the grave; and, indifferent to the grief which prevails in the house of mourning, they indulge in jests, and discourse of matters the most foreign to the catastrophe. Who does not recognise in this the reality of life? who does not feel all the bitterness of the picture, and who is there that has not witnessed similar scenes? These effects were not unknown to the Greeks. We find in Euripedes those simple touches of nature which Shakspeare intermingles with his loftiest tragic sublimity. An example of this occurs in Phædra, where the princess has just expired, and the chorus know not whether they shall enter her apartment. In Alceste, Death and Apollo exchange pleasantries. Death wishes to seize Alceste while she is young, because he is not anxious to have a

wrinkled victim. These contrasts verge on the terrible; but then a single shade too strong or too faint in the expression renders them low or ridiculous.

SHAKSPEARE'S STYLE OF WRITING HAS CORRUPTED TASTE—WRITING IS AN ART.

SHAKSPEARE plays, at one and the same moment, the tragedy in the palace, and the comedy at the door. He does not paint a particular class of men; he mingles, as they are mingled in real life, the sovereign and the slave, the patrician and the plebeian, the warrior and the peasant, the illustrious and the obscure. He makes no distinction between classes; he does not separate the noble from the ignoble, the serious from the comic, the gay from the grave, laughter from tears, joy from grief, or good from evil. He sets in motion the whole of society, as he unfolds at full length the life of a man. The great poet knew that the incidents of a single day cannot present a picture of human existence, and that there is unity from the cradle to the tomb. He takes up a youthful head; and

if he does not strike it off, he gives it you back whitened by age; Time has invested him with his own power.

But this universality of Shakspeare's talent has, by the authority of example and the abuse of imitation, tended to corrupt dramatic literature, and founded the erroneous notion on which, unfortunately, the new school is established. If to attain the sublimity of tragic art it were only requisite to jumble together a succession of incongruous and disconnected scenes, to place the burlesque and the pathetic side by side, to bring the beggar in contact with the king, who might not reasonably hope to rival the greatest poets? Any one who may take the trouble to retrace the incidents of one day of his life, his conversations with men of different conditions, the varied objects that have passed before his eyes, the ball, the funeral, the banquet of the rich, and the distress of the poor; in short, if only this were wanting, any one who writes his journal from hour to hour will produce a drama in the style of the English poet.

Writing is an art. This art has various styles, and each style has its rules. The styles and rules are not arbitrary; they have their origin in nature. Art has merely separated that which nature has blended; and has selected the

finest points without departing from the resemblance of the model. Perfection does not destroy truth. Racine, in all the refinement of his *art*, is more *natural* than Shakspeare, just as the Apollo, in all his *divinity*, is more *human* in his form than an Egyptian colossus.

The privilege which a writer may take of saying and representing every thing, the bustle of the scene, and the multitude of characters, may produce an imposing effect; but after all there is little merit in it. Nothing is easier than to amuse and to excite interest by a tale; in this respect a child may possess as much skill as the ablest writer of fiction. Would it not have been easy for Racine to reduce to action those incidents which his good taste induced him to leave to description? Racine has retrenched from his tragedies all that writers of ordinary genius would have thrown into them. Otherwise, in Phædra, the wife of Theseus would have made amorous advances to Hippolytus on the stage; instead of the fine description of Theramenes, we should have had Franconi's horses, and a terrific wooden monster; in Britannicus, Nero would have offered violence to Junia on the stage; in Bajazet we should have seen the combat of the brother of the Sultan with the eunuchs, &c. The most

wretched melo-drama may draw forth more tears than the most sublime tragedy. Genuine tears are those which are drawn forth by beautiful poetry, which flow at the sound of the lyre of Orpheus; they have their source in mingled admiration and grief. The ancients endowed even the Furies with personal beauty; because there is moral beauty in remorse.

That love of the hideous which has seized us, that horror of the ideal, that passion for lame and hunchbacked heroes, that sympathy with things that are loathsome, trivial, and vulgar, result from a depravity of feeling, which we have not received from Nature, of which we talk so much. Even when we love that which is in a certain degree ugly, it is because we see in it a certain degree of beauty. We naturally prefer a beautiful woman to a plain one, a rose to a thistle, the bay of Naples to the plain of Montrouge, the Parthenon to a pig-sty. It is the same in things figurative and moral. Away then with that *animalized* and *materialized* world which would lead us, even in the effigy of the object, to prefer our likeness copied, with all its defects, by a machine to our portrait painted by the pencil of Raphael.

Still I do not pretend to deny the forced changes which time and revolutions produce in

literary as well as in political opinions; but these changes do not justify the corruption of taste; they only enable us to scorn one of its causes. It is perfectly natural that changes of manners should vary the forms of our pleasures and our pains.

Internal silence prevailed during the absolute monarchy of the reign of Louis XIV and also during the drowsy listlessness of the reign of Louis XV. Wanting emotions within, our dramatic poets sought them from without. They borrowed catastrophes from Greece and Rome, to excite the sympathy of auditors, who were so unfortunate as to have among themselves only subjects of laughter. The French public were in those days so unaccustomed to tragic events, that a writer could not venture to present even fictitious scenes of a very sanguinary nature. Horrors would have excited disgust, even had they been three thousand years old, and consecrated by the genius of Sophocles.

But now that the people having risen into importance, and play a part in the government, like the chorus in Greek tragedy; when real spectacles of terror have occupied us for the space of forty years, the impulse communicated to society has a tendency to communicate itself to the drama. The classic tragedy, with its unities,

and its immoveable scenery, necessarily appears cold; and from coldness to tedium there is but a step. By this we may explain, without defending it, the extravagant character of the modern drama, which is the *fac-simile* of every crime, and presents to the eye of the audience, scaffolds and executions, murders, rapes, and incests, the phantasmagoria of churchyards and haunted castles.

We have now neither actors to perform classic tragedy, nor spectators capable of judging and enjoying it. The regular, the true, and the beautiful, are neither known, felt, nor appreciated. Our taste is so corrupted by the indifference and the vanity of the age, that, if the charming society of the Lafayettes, the Sévignés, the Geoffrins, and the Philosophers, could be revived, it would appear to us insipid. Before and after civilization, when the taste for intellectual objects has either not arisen or has passed away, mankind seek the representation of material objects. Nations begin and end with gladiators and puppets; children and old men are puerile and cruel.

If I were required to say which I consider the finest of the plays of Shakspeare, I should hesitate between Macbeth, Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, Julius Cæsar and Hamlet. I do not however, very highly esteem the much eulogised soliloquy ; I always ask myself how the philosophic Prince of Denmark could entertain the doubts which he expresses on the subject of a future state. After his conversation with the " poor ghost" of the King, his father, ought not his doubts to have been at an end ?

One of the most powerful dramatic scenes in existence is that of the three queens in Richard III. Margaret, after retracing her own misfortunes to harden herself against the miseries of her rival, ends with these words :—

" Thou did'st usurp my place, and dost thou not
Usurp the just proportion of my sorrow?

. . . . .

Farewell, York's wife,—and Queen of sad mischance."

This is tragedy: the sublimest point of tragedy.

I do not believe that any writer ever looked deeper into human nature than Shakspeare.—Take for example the following scene from Macbeth.

MACDUFF.

See, who comes here?

MALCOLM.

My countryman; but yet I know him not.

MACDUFF.

My ever gentle cousin, welcome hither.

MALCOLM.

I know him now—Good God, betimes remove
The means that make us strangers!

ROSSE.

Sir, Amen.

MACDUFF.

Stands Scotland where it did?

ROSSE.

Alas, poor country;
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave; where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;

Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstacy; the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd, for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying, or ere they sicken.

MACDUFF.

O, relation
Too nice, and yet too true!

MALCOLM.

What is the newest grief?

. . . . .

ROSSE.

Your castle is surprised; your wife and babes
Savagely slaughtered. . .

. . . . .

MACDUFF.

My children too?

ROSSE.

Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

MACDUFF.

And I must be from thence!
My wife killed too?

ROSSE.

I have said.

MALCOLM.

Be comforted;
Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge
To cure this deadly grief.

MACDUFF.

He has no children ! . .

. . . . .

This dialogue resembles that between Flavian and Curiatius in Corneille. Flavian enters to announce to the lover of Camilla that he has been chosen to combat the Horatii.

CURIACE.

Albe de trois guerriers a t-elle fait le choix ?

FLAVIAN.

Je viens pour vous l'apprendre.

CURIACE.

Hé bien ! qui sont les trois ?

FLAVIAN.

Vos deux frères et vous.

CURIACE.

Qui ?

FLAVIAN.

Vous et vos deux frères.

The interrogations of Macduff and Curiatius are beauties of the same order. But Macduff's exclamation: " He has no children !" is unparalleled.

The same hand which drew this picture has traced a charming scene in the farewell of Romeo and Juliet. Romeo has been condemned to

banishment, and, on the morning after his secret marriage with Juliet, he is warned by the approaching daylight that it is time to depart.

JULIET.

Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day;
It was the nightingale and not the lark
That pierc'd the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree:
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

ROMEO.

It was the lark, the herald of the morn,
No nightingale: look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east;
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops;
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

JULIET.

Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I;
It is some meteor that the sun exhales
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.

ROMEO.

Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death;
I am content, so thou wilt have it so;
I'll say, yon grey is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads:
I have more care to stay than will to go;—
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.—

How is't my soul? Let's talk, it is not day,

JULIET.

It is, it is, hie hence, be gone, away!
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps,
Some say the lark makes sweet division;
This doth not so for she divideth us;
Some say the lark and loathed toad change eyes;
O, now, I would they had changed voices too!
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,
Hunting thee hence with hunt's up to the day.
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

This contrast of the charms of the dawning of morning and the parting endearments of the lovers, with the catastrophe which is about to follow, is very touching. The sentiment is more natural than that of the Greek tragedies and less pastoral than that of the Italian tragi-comedies. I know of only one dramatic scene which bears any resemblance to that which I have just quoted from Romeo and Juliet. It occurs in an Indian drama. The resemblance, however, does not consist in the freshness of the imagery, in the simplicity of the sorrowful farewell, and certainly not in the interest of the situation. Sacontala, when about to quit her paternal roof, feels herself drawn back by her veil.

SACONTALA.

Who thus seizes the folds of my veil?

OLD MAN.

It is the kid which thou hast so often fed with the grains of the synmaka. He will not quit his benefactress.

SACONTALA.

Why dost thou weep, tender kid? I am forced to forsake our common home. When thou did'st lose thy mother, soon after thy birth, I took thee under my care. Return to thy manger, poor young kid, we must now part.

The farewell scene in Romeo and Juliet is very lightly touched by Bandello. It belongs wholly to Shakspeare. Bandello describes the parting of the lovers in the few following words:

"A la fine cominciando l'aurora a voler uscire; si basciarono; estrettamente abbracciarono gli amanti, e pieni di lagrime e sospiri si dissero addio."

"At length the dawn beginning to appear, the lovers kissed; they closely embraced one another, and full of tears and sighs bade each other adieu."

Bring together Lady Macbeth, Queen Margaret, Ophelia, Miranda, Cordelia, Jessica, Perdita, Imogen, and the versatility of the poet's genius must excite our wonder. There is a charming ideality in Shakspeare's youthful female characters. The blind King Lear says to his faithful Cordelia,

> "When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
> And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
> And pray, and sing....."

Ophelia, fantastically decked with straws and flowers, mistaking her brother for Hamlet, whom she loves, and who has killed her father, addresses him thus,

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember; .. .."

"— I would give you some violets; but they withered all, when my father died."

In Hamlet, that tragedy of maniacs, that *Royal Bedlam* in which every character is either crazy or criminal, in which feigned madness is added to real madness, and in which the grave itself furnishes the stage with the skull of a fool; in that Odeon of shadows and spectres where we hear nothing but reveries, the challenge of sentinels, the screeching of the night-bird and the roaring of the sea, Gertrude thus relates the death of Ophelia who has drowned herself,

"There is a willow grows askant the brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang; an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
Which time, she chaunted snatches of old tunes
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indu'd

Unto that element; but long it could not be,
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death."

The body of Ophelia is carried to the church-yard, and the guilty Queen, bending over the grave, exclaims:

"Sweets to the sweet, farewell!
I hop'd thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not have strew'd thy grave."

The effect of all this is like the spell of enchantment.

Othello, in the delirium of his jealousy thus addresses Desdemona as she sleeps:

"..... O thou weed,
Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet
That the sense aches at thee—would thou
Had'st ne'er been born!"

The Moor when about to smother his wife, kisses her and says:

"O balmy breath, that dost almost persuade
Justice to break her sword.....
Be thus when thou art dead, and I will kill thee
And love thee after"

In the Winter's Tale we find the same poetic grace adapted to feelings of happiness. Perdita thus addresses Florizel:

" Now, my fairest friend,
I would I had some flowers o' the spring, that might
Become your time of day; and yours, and yours,
That wear upon your virgin branches yet
Your maidenhood's growing:—O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted, thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon! Daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids; bold tulips, and
The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one! O these I lack,
To make you garlands of; and, my sweet friend,
To strew him o'er and o'er.

To this Florizel replies:

" When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever; when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms;
Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing, but that; move still, still so, and own
No other function....."

In Cymbeline, Imogen being accused of infidelity to Poshumus, exclaims :

" False to his bed ! What is it to be false ?
To lie in watch there, and to think on him ?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock ?".

When Arviragus enters the cave, bearing Imogen, as if dead, in his arms, Guiderius says :

" O sweetest, fairest lily !
My brother bears thee not the one half so well
As when thou grew'st thyself."

Belarius exclaims .

" O melancholy !
Whoever yet could sound thy bottom ? find
The ooze, to show what coast thy sluggish crare
Might easiliest harbour in !....."

Imogen throws herself on the neck of Poshumus, when he is convinced of his unfounded jealousy, and he exclaims :

" Hang there like fruit, my soul
Till the tree die !"

Then Cymbeline, addressing his daughter says :

" How now, my child !
What mak'st thou me a dullard in this act ?
Wilt thou not speak to me ?
Your blessing, Sir,"

replies Imogen at his feet.

I have quoted the above passages, merely as examples of beauty of style, without reference to the merits of the plays from which they are taken. I have not attempted to paint the heart-moving madness of Ophelia, the resolute love of Juliet, the nature, the affection and the terror of Desdemona, when Othello awakens her and declares his intention of killing her, or the piety, tenderness and generosity which characterise Imogen: in all this the romantic takes place of the tragic, and the picture appeals more forcibly to the senses than to the soul.

FULL and complete justice being rendered to suavities of pencilling and harmony, I must say that the works of the romantic era gain much in being quoted by extracts. A few pages fertile in beauty are generally interspersed through a mass of barrenness. To read Shakspeare from beginning to end is to fulfil a pious but wearisome duty to departed genius. The cantos of Dante form a rhymed chronicle in which beauty of diction does not always compensate for dulness. The merit of the monuments of classic literature is of a contrary kind. It consists in the perfection of the whole and the just proportion of parts.

There is another truth which must likewise be acknowledged. All Shakspeare's young female

characters are formed on one model. They are all mere girls, and, setting apart the shades of difference between the characters of daughter, lover, and wife, they all resemble each other as closely as twin sisters; nay, have the same smile, the same look, the same tone of voice. If we could forget their names and close our eyes, we should not know which of them was speaking—their language is more elegiac than dramatic. These charming sketches are like the outlines traced by Raphael, when a figure of celestial beauty suggested itself to his genius: but Raphael converted the sketch into a picture, whilst Shakspeare contented himself with his first unfinished pencillings, and did not always take time to paint.

We must not compare the Ossianic shadows of the English stage—those victims so full of tenderness and fortitude, who allowed themselves to be sacrificed like courageous lambs—we must not compare the Delias of Tibullus, the Charicleas of Heliodorus with the heroines of the Greek and French drama, who of themselves sustain the whole weight of a tragedy. Happy situations, striking effects, and touches of beauty scattered here and there, are widely different from parts sustained from begining to end with equal superiority, and strongly drawn

characters, occupying their proper places in the picture. The Desdemonas, Juliets, Ophelias, Perditas, Cordelias, Mirandas, are not like Antigone, Electra, Iphigenia Phædra, Andromache, Chimene, Roxana, Monimia, Berenice, or Esther, nor can they be compared even with Zaire or Amenaide. A few phrases of deep passion, more or less beautifully expressed in poetic prose, cannot be pronounced equal to the same sentiments clothed in the pure language of the Gods. Let us take for example, Iphigenia's appeal to her father :—

Peut-être assez d'honneurs environnaient ma vie,
Pour ne pas souhaiter qu'elle me fût ravie,
Ni qu'en me l'arrachant un sévère destin
Si près de ma naissance en eût marqué la fin.
Fille d'Agamemnon, c'est moi qui la première,
Seigneur, vous appelai de ce doux nom de père.

. . . . . .

Hélas ! avec plaisir je me faisais conter
Tous les noms des pays que vous allez dompter ;
Et déjà d'Ilion présageant la conquête,
D'un triomphe si beau je préparais la fête.

And the beautiful lines delivered by Monimia :

Si tu m'aimais, Phœdime, il fallait me pleurer,
Quand d'un titre funeste on me vint honorer,
Et lorsque m'arrachant du doux sein de la Grèce
Dans ce climat barbare on traîna ta maîtresse.

Retourne maintenant chez les peuples heureux ;
Et si mon nom encor s'est conservé chez eux,
Dis-leur ce que tu vois, et de toute ma gloire,
Phœdime, conte-leur la malheureuse histoire.

Can the ballad of the Willow compete with this complaint, issuing from the *sweet bosom of Greece?*

If we wish to compare the more violent conflicts of the soul with the love of Juliet and Desdemona, we may select the following passage in which Paulina replies to Polyeucte who advises her to return to Severus.

Que t'ai-je fait, cruel, pour être ainsi traitée,
Et pour me reprocher, au mépris de ma foi,
Un amour si puissant que j'ai vaincu pour toi ?
. . . . . .
Souffre que de toi-même elle obtienne ta vie,
Pour vivre sous tes lois à jamais asservie.

Polyeucte is gone to death, *to glory*, and Paulina says to Felix

Mon époux, en mourant, m'a laissé ses lumières ;
Son sang, dont tes bourreaux viennent de me couvrir,
M'a dessillé les yeux, et me les vient d'ouvrir.
Je vois, je sais, je crois, je suis désabusée,
De ce bienheureux sang tu me vois baptisée ;
Je suis chrétienne ! . . .

Can any thing be finer than this conflict of all the affections of human nature, in the midst of which the Deity intervenes, to create miraculously a new passion, religious enthusiasm in the heart of Paulina? On reading this we feel ourselves raised to a region loftier than the earth in which Desdemona and Juliet dwelt. Paulina's *Je suis chrétienne* is like a declaration of love in heaven!

Then again Chimene! But it would be requisite to quote the whole part to afford any idea of its beauty. Corneille compounded the characters of the Cid and Chimene of a union of honour, filial piety, and love.

> J'aimais, j'étais aimée, et nos pères d'accord;
> Et je vous en contais la première nouvelle
> Au malheureux moment que naissait leur querelle.

The passion, the excitement, and the dramatic interest kindle and encrease from scene to scene to the famous line,

> Sors vainqueur d'un combat dont Chimène est le prix!

which precedes that exclamation of exultation, courage, pride, and glory,

> Paraissez, Navarrois, Maures et Castillans!

What are all Shakspeare's females in comparison with Esther?

Est-ce toi, chère Elise? O jour trois fois heureux!
Que béni soit le Ciel qui te rend à mes vœux!
Toi, qui, de Benjamin comme moi descendue,
Fus de mes premiers ans la compagne assidue,
Et qui, d'un même joug souffrant l'oppression
M'aidais à soupirer les malheurs de Sion.

. . . . . .

On m'élevait alors solitaire et cachée,
Sous les yeux vigilans du sage Mardochée.

. . . . . .

Du triste état des Juifs, jour et nuit agité,
Il me tira du sein de mon obscurité,
Et, sur mes faibles mains fondant leur délivrance,
Il me fit d'un empire accepter l'espérance.

. . . . . .

Cependant mon amour pour notre nation
A rempli ce palais des filles de Sion,
Jeunes et tendres fleurs, par le sort agitées,
Sous un ciel étranger comme moi transplantées.

. . . . . .

Aux pieds de l'Eternel je viens m'humilier,
Et goûter le plaisir de me faire oublier.
Mais à tous les Persans je cache leurs familles.
Il faut les appeler. Venez, venez, mes filles,
Compagnes autrefois de ma captivité,
De l'antique Jacob jeune postérité.

If there are any Huns, Hottentots, Hurons, Goths, Vandals, or other barbarians, insensible

to the feminine modesty, the dignity, and the melody of this exquisite passage, may they be seventy times seven-fold delighted by the charms of their own native productions. " I thought," says Racine in his preface to Esther, " that I could fill up the whole of my dramatic action with such scenes as God himself has in a manner prepared." Racine justly thought so, for he alone possessed the harp of David consecrated to the scenes *prepared* by God.

Judging with an impartiality the general character of foreign productions and our own (if indeed we are capable of judging foreign literary works, which I much doubt) it may be said that, though equal in power of thought, ours have the advantage of regularity and taste in composition. Genius creates, taste regulates. Taste is the good sense of genius; without taste genius is but a sublime madness: the sure touch which draws from the lyre the exact tone it ought to render is more rare than even the faculty which creates. Talent and genius, diversely diffused, latent and unrecognized, as Montesquieu says " frequently pass through us without unpacking," they exist in equal proportion in all ages, but in the course of those ages, it is only among certain natures, and at certain periods of time, that taste is developed in its

purity. Before this period arrives, and after its conclusion, all will be imperfect through deficiency or excess. Hence the reason why finished productions are so rare; for they must necessarily emanate from the happy union of taste and genius. But this rare concurrence, like the concurrence of certain stars, seems to require the revolution of ages for its consummation, and then its duration is but momentary.

THE ERA OF SHAKSPEARE.

THE period of the appearance of a great genius should be well considered, to explain certain affinities of that genius, to show what it received from the past, gathered from the present, or left to the future. The extravagant imagination of the present age, which elevates every great name to the clouds, that morbid imagination which, disdains reality, begot a Shakspeare after its own fashion. The son of the Stratford butcher is a giant who has fallen from some Pelion upon Ossa in the midst of his barbarous countrymen and by his seven-league strides left his cotemporaries far behind him. Nay, Shakspeare, we are told, is like Dante, a solitary comet which, having traversed the constellations of the ancient firmament, returns to the feet of the Deity, and says to him, like the thunder, "Here I am."

The extravagant and the romantic are not to be admitted into the domain of fact. Dante ap-

peared in what may justly be called an age of darkness. The compass had then scarcely enabled the mariner to steer through the well known waters of the Mediterranean. America and the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope were yet undiscovered. The inventor of gunpowder had not changed the whole system of war, nor had the introduction of printing operated a complete metamorphosis in society, and the feudal system pressed with all the weight of its darkness upon enslaved Europe.

But when the mother of Shakspeare gave birth to her obscure son, there had already elapsed in the year 1564 two thirds of the famous age of human regeneration and reformation, of that age in which the principal discoveries of modern times were accomplished, the true system of the universe ascertained, the heavens and the earth explored, the sciences cultivated, and the fine arts carried to a pitch of perfection which they have never since attained. Great deeds and great men appeared in all parts. Families repaired to the woods of New England, to sow the seeds of a fertile independence; provinces broke the yoke of their oppressors, and raised themselves to the rank of nations.

On the thrones of Europe, after Charles V. Francis I and Leo X, there were seated Sixtus V,

Elizabeth, Henry IV, Don Sebastian, and that Philip, who, though surnamed the Cruel, was certainly not a vulgar tyrant.

In the list of illustrious warriors were Don John of Austria, the Duke of Alva, Admirals Vincero and John Andrew Doria, the Prince of Orange, the two Guises, Coligny, Biron, Lesdiguières, Montluc, and La Noue.

Among the magistrates, legislators, ministers of state, there were l'Hôpital, Harlay, Du Moulins, Cujas, Sully, Olivarez, Cecil, and d'Ossat.

Among the prelates and sectarians, scholars, and authors, we find the names of Carlo Borromeo, St. Francis de Sales, Calvin, Theodore de Beza, Buchanan, Tycho-Brahe, Galileo, Bacon, Cardan, Kepler, Ramus, Scaliger, Stephanus, Manutius, Justus Lipsius, Vida, Baronius, Mariana, Amyot, Du Haillan, Montaigne, Bignon, Thomas d'Aubigny, Brantôme, Marot, Ronsard, and hundreds besides.

Among the names eminent in art were those of Titian, Paulo Veronese, Annibale Carrachi, Sansovino, Julio Romano, Domenichino, Palladio, Vignole, Jean Goujon, Guido, Poussin, Rubens, Vandyke, and Velasquez. It was Michael Angelo's fate to live till the year which gave birth to Shakspeare.

So far from Shakspeare being a leader in the

march of civilization, then emerging from the bosom of barbarism, he was the last-born child of the middle age, a barbarian falling into the ranks of advancing civilization, and as it were, drawing it back to the past. He was not a solitary star; he moved in concert with luminaries worthy of his firmament—Camoens, Tasso, Ercilla, Lopez de Vega, and Calderon, three epic and two tragic poets of the first rank. But we must examine all these topics in detail, and shall first direct our attention to the material condition of society at the period here referred to.

In the time of Shakspeare, if the cultivation of the mind was pushed farther on certain points than even at the present day, the physical condition of society was equally improved. Without adverting to Italy, where the palaces, themselves master-pieces of art, were internally adorned with other master works—Italy, enriched with the commerce of Florence, Genoa, and Venice, and clothed by her manufactures in silks, gold, and velvet—without going beyond the Alps in search of perfect civilization, we will confine ourselves to the country of the poet. We shall there find the great ameliorations which were due to the government of Elizabeth.

Erasmus informs us that under Henry VII and

Henry VIII it was difficult to breathe in the houses. Air and light were admitted to the rooms through extremely close lattices, glazing being reserved for the windows of castles and churches. Each story projected beyond the story below it, and thus the fronts of the houses inclining forward, the roofs nearly touched each other from the opposite sides, and the dark streets seemed as if covered by roofs. The greater part of the dwelling houses were without fire-places ; the floors of the rooms consisted of clay strewed with rushes or covered with a stratum of sand destined to absorb the excrements of the cats and dogs. Erasmus attributes the plagues, then frequent in England, to the want of cleanliness among the people.

In the houses of the rich, the furniture consisted of arras tapestry, long planks laid across trestles for dining tables, a cupboard, a chair, some benches, and a number of stools. The poorer sort of people slept upon hurdles, or bundles of straw, with a piece of sacking for a counterpane, and a log of wood for a bolster. and he who was lucky enough to possess a wool mattress and a pillow stuffed with bran was an object of envy to his neighbours. Harrison, repeating what he heard from the old people of his time, declares that in the reign of Elizabeth the

farmers possessed three or four feather beds, furnished with suitable bed clothes and silk hangings; that their tables were covered with white linen cloths, and that their cupboards were usually garnished with vessels of earthenware, a silver salt-cellar, a drinking cup, and a dozen spoons of the same metal.

The farmers of the present day in France, so proud of her civilization, have not yet attained an equal degree of comfort.

Shakspeare was reared under the patronage of this queen, who sent her sailors to the farthest extremity of the globe, in search of the produce of the cultivator. Sufficient tranquillity prevailed throughout England to allow the poet to tune his lyre in security, nor were there wanting either at home or abroad subjects suited to rouse the feelings or inspire the fancy.

At home, Elizabeth presented in her own person an historical character. Shakspeare had attained his twenty-third year when Mary Stuart was beheaded. The child of catholic parents, and probably himself a catholic, he had doubtless heard among his own community that Elizabeth had endeavoured to make Rolstone the instrument of seducing her fair captive, in order to disgrace her, and that, taking advantage of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, she had made an

attempt to deliver over the Queen of Scots to the vindictive feelings of the Scotch protestants. Who knows but curiosity might have led young William from Stratford to Fotheringay to witness the catastrophe? Who can say but he may have seen the bed, the chamber, the vaults hung with black, the block, the head of Mary, into which the executioner, by his first unskilful stroke of the axe, had driven a portion of the unfortunate victim's coif and grey hair? May not the eyes of Shakspeare have rested with interest and curiosity on the beautiful and mutilated corse?

Some time after, Elizabeth cast another head at the feet of Shakspeare. Mahomet II had an Icoglan decapitated for the purpose of giving a painter an idea of death. Strange compound of man and woman! Elizabeth seems, during the whole of her mysterious life, to have felt but one passion, and never to have known love. The last malady of this queen, say the Memoirs of her time, proceeded from a grief, the cause of which she ever kept a profound secret. She never evinced an inclination to have recourse to remedies, as if she had made up her mind long before to die, being weary of her life from some secret cause, which was said to be the death of the Earl of Essex.

The sixteenth century, the spring-time of modern civilization, flourished in England more prosperously than in other parts of the globe. It developed those sturdy generations of men, who already bore within them the seeds of liberty in the persons of Cromwell and Milton. Elizabeth dined to the sound of drums and trumpets, whilst her parliament was passing atrocious laws against the papists, and whilst the yoke of sanguinary oppression weighed down unhappy Ireland. The executions at Tyburn alternated with the gaieties of the fashionable ball; the austerities of the puritans with the revels of Kenilworth; comedies with sermons; lampoons with hymns; literary disquisitions with philosophical discussions and sectarian controversies.

The spirit of adventure animated the nation, as at the period of the wars in Palestine. Protestant crusaders volunteered to combat the idolaters, that is to say, the catholics. They followed across the seas Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, who, like Peter the Hermit, were friends of Christ but enemies of the Cross. Engaged in the cause of religious liberty, the English lent their aid to all who sought to shake off the yoke of tyranny; they shed their blood

beneath the white plume of Henry IV and the yellow flag of the Prince of Orange. Shakspeare witnessed all this, and he also was witness to those auspicious tempests, which cast the wrecks of the Spanish vessels upon the shores of his delivered country.

Abroad, the picture was not less favourable to poetic inspiration. In Scotland, there were the vices and ambition of Murray—the murder of Rizzio—Darnley, strangled and his body cast to the winds—Bothwell espousing Mary in the fortress of Dunbar, and afterwards becoming a fugitive and a pirate in Norway—Morton delivered up to the executioner.

The Low Countries presented all the miseries inseparable from a nation's emancipation: Cardinal de Granvelle, the Duke of Alva—the tragic deaths of the Count d'Egmont and the Count de Horn.

In Spain, besides the death of Don Carlos, we find Philip II erecting the sombre Escurial, multiplying his auto-da-fés, and saying to his physicians: "Are you afraid to take a few drops of blood from a man who has made it flow in rivers?"

In Italy, the history of the Cenci, renewing the ancient adventures of Venice, Verona, Milan, Bologna, and Florence.

In Germany, Wallenstein's career had just commenced.

In France, the nearest country to the native land of Shakspeare, what were the stirring events of the time?

The tocsin of St. Bartholomew sounded when the author of Macbeth had attained his eighteenth year, and England was convulsed by the intelligence of that massacre; exaggerated accounts of it, (if exaggerated they could be) details calculated to inflame even the imaginations of children, were printed in London and Edinburgh, and sold in every town and village throughout the country. A great deal was said about the reception given by Elizabeth to the ambassador of Charles IX. "The silence of night reigned through the royal apartments. The ladies and courtiers were ranged in rows on each side, clothed in deep mourning; and when the ambassador passed through the midst of them, none made their obeisance, nor even turned upon him a civil look." Marlowe brought upon the stage his play entitled "The Massacre of Paris," and possibly Shakspeare may have made his debut in one of its characters.

The reign of Charles IX was succeeded by that of Henry III, so fertile in catastrophes;

Catherine de Medicis, the favourites, the day of the barricades, the assassination of the two Guises at Blois, the death of Henry III at St. Cloud, the agitations of the League, the murder of Henri IV, must have varied incessantly the emotions of a poet who beheld the long chain of events extending before him. The soldiers of Elizabeth, the Earl of Essex himself took part in our civil wars, and fought at Hâvre, Ivry, Rouen, and Amiens. Some veterans of the English army might have recounted at the fire-side of William Shakspeare the calamities they had witnessed in our fields of battle.

Thus it may be said that the very genius of the age wakened the genius of Shakspeare. The memorable dramas which were performing around him have furnished subjects on which the heritors of their art have exercised their skill: thus Charles IX, the Duke de Guise, Mary Stuart, Don Carlos, the Earl of Essex, were destined to inspire Schiller, Otway, Alfieri, Campistron, Thomas Corneille, Chénier, and Raynouard.

Shakspeare was born in the interval between the religious revolution which commenced under Henry VIII, and the political revolution which

was preparing to burst forth under Charles I. Both before and after him, there was nothing throughout England but scenes of bloodshed and horror.

In the reign of Edward VI, Somerset, the Protector of the kingdom and uncle of the young King, perished on the scaffold.

In the reign of Mary, there were the martyrs of Protestantism, the beheading of Lady Jane Grey, and Philip, the exterminator of protestants, landing in England, as if to review and devote to destruction the camp of the enemy.

With the reign of Elizabeth came the martyrs of catholicism. Elizabeth herself, anointed with the sacred oil in conformity with the Roman ritual, became the persecutrix of the faith which had placed the crown upon her head. Elizabeth! the daughter of that Anne Boleyn who caused the schism from the church of Rome, who was sacrificed after Thomas More, and who died half lunatic, praying, laughing, and contrasting the smallness of her neck with the breadth of the executioner's axe.

Shakspeare in his youth must frequently have encountered old monks, chased from their cloisters, who had seen Henry VIII, his reforms, his destructive hand laid upon their

monasteries, his court fools, his wives, his mistresses—and his executioners. When the poet died, Charles I was in his sixteenth year.

Thus Shakspeare might have laid one hand on the hoary heads menaced by the last but one of the Tudors, and the other on the auburn locks of the second of the Stuarts;—on that head which was painted by Vandyke and subsequently struck off by the Parliament party. Filling this position, contemplating these tragic objects, the great poet descended into the tomb. His life was employed in drawing his spectres and his blind kings, in depicting female sorrow and the punishment of ambition, so as to unite by analogous fictions the realities of the past with the realities of the future.

POETS AND OTHER WRITERS CONTEMPORARY WITH SHAKSPEARE.

JAMES I. reigned between the sword, which terrified him while yet unborn, and the axe, which slew, but could not terrify his son. His reign separated the scaffold of Fotheringay from that of Whitehall: a gloomy period, in which Bacon and Shakspeare were extinguished.

Those two illustrious contemporaries trod the same ground: I have already mentioned the foreigners who were their companions in glory. France, which was then behindhand in letters, presents to us only Amyot, de Thou, Ronsard, and Montaigne, minds of humbler flight. Hardy and Garnier had scarcely begun to lisp the first accents of our Melpomene. Rabelais indeed had been dead but fifteen years when Shakspeare was born. The buffoon would have proved qualified to measure himself with the tragic dramatist.

The latter had already passed thirty-one years on earth, when the unfortunate Tasso and the heroic Ercilla left it, both dying in 1595. The English poet founded the theatre of his nation, whilst Lope de Vèga established that of Spain; but Lope had a rival in Calderon. The author of the "*Meilleur Alcade*" had embarked as a volunteer, in the the invincible Armada, at the very time when the author of Falstaff was calming the inquietudes of the

"Fair vestal throned in the West"

The Castilian dramatist alludes to this famed Armada in his "*Fuerza lastimosa.*" "The winds," he says, "destroyed the finest naval armament that was ever seen." Lope was coming, sword in hand, to assault Shakspeare on his own hearth, as the minstrels of William the Conqueror attacked the Scalds of Harold. Lope has treated religion as Shakspeare treated history. The characters of the first chant on the stage the *Gloria Patri*, interspersed with songs. Those of the second sing lively ballads, the *lazzi* of the grave-digger.

Cervantes, wounded at Lepanto, in 1570, a slave in Algiers, in 1575, ransomed in 1581, began in a prison his inimitable comic work, and dared not continue it till long afterwards, so

much was it misinterpreted. Cervantes died in the same year and the same month with Shakspeare. Two documents specify the wealth of these authors.

William Shakspeare, by his last testament, bequeathed to his wife his second best bed. He left two of his brother actors thirty-two shillings each, to buy rings. He constituted his eldest daughter, Susan, his residuary legatee, and made some little presents to his second, Judith, who signed a cross at the bottom of the papers, proving that she could not write.

Michael Cervantes acknowledged, by note, that he had received, as the dower of his wife, Catherine Salazor y Palacios, a spindle, an iron skillet, three spits, a shovel, a rasp, a brush, six bushels of meal, five pounds of wax, two little stools, a four-legged table, a woollen mattress, a copper candlestick, two quilts, two infant Jesuses, with their little clothes and shirts, forty-four hens and pullets, with one cock!

There is, now-a-days, no scribbler so mean but would exclaim against the injustice of mankind and their contempt of genius, if he were not gorged with pensions, a hundredth part of which would have been a fortune to Cervantes and to Shakspeare. In 1616, therefore, the

painter of Lear's fool, and the painter of Don Quixotte, worthy fellow-travellers ! set out together for a better world.

Corneille had come to supply their place in the cosmopolite family of great minds, whose children are born among all nations ; as in Rome, Brutus was succeeded by Brutuses, and Scipio by Scipios.

The bard of the Cid, a boy of six years, beheld the last days of the bard of Othello ; as Michael Angelo delivered up his palette, his chisel, his square, and his lute, to death, in the same year when Shakspeare, with the buskin on his feet, and the mask in his hand, entered on life ; as the dying poet of Lusitania hailed the first suns of the bard of Albion. While the young butcher of Stratford, armed with his knife, apostrophized before he slaughtered his victim sheep and heifers, Camoens made the tomb of Inez, on the banks of Tagus, echo with his swan-like melody.

" For how many years may I yet celebrate ye, oh! nymphs of the Tagus? Fortune draws me on to wander through sorrows and perils ; sometimes o'er the sea, sometimes in the midst of combats, sometimes degraded by shameful indigence, with no asylum but a hospital. It

sufficeth not that I was devoted to so many woes; it seems that grief must come even from those I sing. Poets, you can bestow glory; behold its price! My years decline; soon will my summer and mine autumn pass away. Misfortune leads to the brink of dark repose, and of eternal sleep."

And must the greatest geniuses, in all ages, and of all countries, have to repeat those last words of Camoens?

Milton, aged but eight years when Shakspeare died, rose, like a shade, beside that great man's tomb. Milton also complains of having fallen on evil days, and too late an age.

> Unless an age too late, or cold
> Climate, or years damp, my intended wing
> Depress'd.

He felt this apprehension even at the moment when he was composing the ninth book of Paradise Lost, which includes the seduction of Eve, with the most pathetic scenes between her and Adam.

These divine spirits, predecessors or contemporaries of Shakspeare, have in their natures something which partakes of the beauty of their countries. Dante was an illustrious citizen and

valiant warrior. Tasso would have been well placed in the brilliant band who followed Renaud. Lope and Calderon bore arms. Ercilla was at once the Homer and the Achilles of his day. Cervantes and Camoens showed the glorious scars of courage and misfortune. The style of these soldier-poets has often the same elevation which marked their careers. To Shakspeare's lot fell a widely different one. He is impassioned in his works, but rarely noble; dignity is sometimes wanting in his style, as it was in his life.

And what was that life? How much is known of it? Very little! He to whom it belonged concealed it, and cared but little either for his works or his days. If we study the private sentiments of Shakspeare in his pages, the painter of so many dark pictures would appear to have been a wayward man, referring every thing to his own existence; it is true that he found abundant occupation in so vast an inward life. The poet's father, probably a Catholic, once a justice of peace, and alderman of Stratford, became a woolstapler and a butcher. William, the eldest of ten children, worked at his father's trade. I have already said that he who held the dagger of Melpomene bled calves before he killed tyrants, and addressed pathetic harangues to the spectators of the unjust death dealt to these innocent beasts. Shakspeare, in his youth, attacked beneath an apple-tree, which still re-

mains celebrated, a party of tipplers of Bidford, and pelted them with ale jugs. At eighteen he married the daughter of a farmer, Anne Hathway, his elder by seven years, by whom he had a girl, then twins, male and female. This fruitfulness neither steadied nor even much affected him. He so soon and so thoroughly forgot Mistress Anne, that he only remembered her in order to *interline* in his will the before-mentioned legacy of " his second best bed."

A poaching adventure drove him from his native town. Taken in the fact, in the park of Sir Thomas Lucy, he appeared before the offended party, on whom he revenged himself by placarding his door with a satirical ballad. The rancour of Shakspeare was lasting; for, from Sir Thomas Lucy he drew Justice Shallow, in the second part of Henry the Fourth, and overwhelmed him with the buffooneries of Falstaff. The displeasure of Sir Thomas having obliged Shakspeare to quit Stratford, he went to seek his fortune in London.

Poverty pursued him thither. Reduced to hold gentlemen's horses at the theatre doors, he disciplined a troop of intelligent servants, who took the name of " Shakspeare's boys." From the doors of the theatres, gliding behind the scenes, he held the place of call-boy. Green,

his kinsman, an actor of Black Friars, thrust him from the wings on the stage, and from actor he rose to author. Criticisms and pamphlets were published against him, to which he made no reply. He acted the part of Friar Lawrence in Romeo and Juliet, and that of the Ghost in Hamlet, in an appalling manner. It is known that he tilted his wit against that of Ben Jonson, at the Syren Club, founded by Sir Walter Raleigh. Of the rest of his theatrical career we are ignorant; it is only marked by the master-pieces which dropped twice or thrice a year from his genius—"*bis pomis utilis arbos*—" and of which he took no care. He did not even affix his name to these performances, while he permitted that great name to be inserted in a catalogue of forgotten comedians (*entre-parleurs*, as such were then called, persons who spoke dialogue on the stage); in pieces still more completely forgotten. He did not give himself the trouble either to collect or to print his dramas. Posterity, which never came into his memory, exhumed them from their ancient repositories, as one digs up the remains of a statue by Phidias, from among the obscure images of Olympian athletæ.

Dante unceremoniously classed himself with the great poets :

Vidi quattro grand ombre a me venire.

Tasso spoke of his immortality as well as others. Shakspeare said nothing of his person, his family, his wife, his son, who died at the age of twelve years, his two daughters, his country, his works, his glory. Whether he was unconscious of his genius, or whether he disdained it, he appears not to have believed that it would be remembered. Hamlet says :

" Oh heavens ! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet ? then there is hope a great man's memory may out live his life half a year, but by'r Lady ! he must build churches then, or else shall he suffer not thinking on !"

Shakspeare abruptly left the theatre at fifty, in the plenitude of his success and his genius. Without seeking extraordinary causes for this retreat, it is probable that the careless actor quitted the stage as soon as he had secured a small independence. The world persists in judging the character of a man by the nature of his talents, and the nature of his talents by the character of the man ; but the man and his talents are sometimes very disproportioned to each other, without ceasing to be homogeneous. Which was the real self—Shakspeare the tragic

writer, or Shakspeare the joyous liver? Both are genuine, and connected by the mysterious links of nature. Lord Southampton was Shakspeare's friend, yet it is not evident that he did anything considerable for him. Elizabeth and James I patronized the actor, and apparently despised him. On returning to his home he planted the first mulberry tree which had been seen in the neighbourhood of Stratford. He died at New Place, his country house, 1616, April 26. The anniversary of the same day which in 1654 had ushered him into the world dawned to lead him into the presence of his God. Buried beneath a flat stone in Stratford church, a statue of him was seated in a niche like that of a saint, painted in black and scarlet, repaired by the grandfather of Mrs. Siddons, re-daubed with plaster by Malone. Many years ago a crack was observed in his tomb. The surveying churchwarden discovered neither bones nor coffin. He perceived some dust, and it was considered something to have seen the dust of Shakspeare. The poet, in an epitaph, had forbidden any one to disturb his ashes; a friend of repose and obscurity, he seemed on his guard against the acclamations and glory of his future fame. Such then is the whole life and death of this immortal bard—a house in a hamlet, a mulberry tree, a lantern which the author

actor used in Friar Laurence, a rude village effigy, a half open tomb.

Castrell, a protestant minister, bought New Place. The morose churchman, wearied by the pilgrimages of this great man's votaries, cut down the mulberry tree, and subsequently razed the house to the ground, selling its materials. In 1740, some English ladies erected a marble monument to Shakspeare in Westminster Abbey. Thus did they honour the poet who so dearly loved women, and who in Cymbeline calls England " a swan's nest in a great pool."

Was Shakspeare lame, like Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, and Prayers, the daughters of Jupiter? The libels published against him while living accuse him not of a defect which would have been so apparent on the stage. The word lame is as applicable to a hand as to a foot; lame of one hand. Lame generally signifies imperfect defective, and keeps the same sense in figurative language. But, whatever he might be, the boy of Stratford, so far from feeling ashamed of his infirmity, like Childe Harold, fears not to remind one of his mistresses of it, calling himself

Lame by fortune's dearest spite.

Shakspeare must have had many loves, if we

were to reckon one for each sonnet, in all a hundred and fifty-four. Sir William Davenant boasted of being himself a son of the handsome hostess of the Crown, at Oxford, a friend of Shakspeare's.

The poet is severe enough upon himself in his little odes, and speaks disagreeable truths to the objects of his worship. He reproaches himself with something; does he sigh thus mysteriously over his morals, or complain of his inglorious life? It cannot be unravelled. In his CX sonnet he says:

> My name received a brand,

In the XXXVI:

> I may not evermore acknowledge thee
> Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame
> Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
> Unless thou take that honour from thy name.

Commentators have conjectured that Shakspeare thus did homage to Queen Elizabeth, or to Lord Southampton, symbolically transformed into a mistress. Nothing was more common in the fifteenth century than this mysticism of sentiment and this abuse of allegory. Hamlet speaks of Yorick as of a woman. When the grave-diggers find his head, he exclaims

"Alas poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest; of most excellent fancy ....Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft."

In the time of Shakspeare, the custom of kissing on the cheek was unknown. Hamlet speaks of Yorick as Margaret of Scotland did of Alain Chartier. Be this as it may, many sonnets are evidently addressed to women; plays on words spoil these erotic effusions; but their harmony has won for the author the epithet of "honey-tongued." Ever since the days of Catullus, bards have raved of a rose which should be plucked before its leaves fell. Shakspeare speaks more plainly, he bids his love renew her charms in a fair little daughter, who shall renew hers in another, and so forth—a sure method to make the rose, though plucked, never-fading.

The creator of Juliet and Desdemona grew old without ceasing to love. Was the unknown female to whom he addressed his charming verses proud or happy in being the object of Shakspeare's sonnets? It may be doubted. Glory to an old man is like diamonds to an old woman, they may array, but they cannot embellish.

CII.

My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming;
I love not less, though less the show appear;
That love is merchandised, whose rich esteeeming
The owner's tongue doth publish every where.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays,
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days.
Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burdens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight,
Therefore, like her, I sometimes hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song.

LXXIII.

That time of year thou mayest in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As, after sunset, fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
As on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

LXXI.

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so,
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
Oh if (I say) you look upon this verse,
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love e'en with my life decay;
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

There is more of poetry, imagination, and melancholy, in these verses than sensibility, passion, and depth. Shakspeare loved; but he believed no more in love than he believed in anything else. A woman to him is a bird, a zephyr, a flower, which charms and passes away. Owing to his carelessness or ignorance of fame, and to his profession, which excluded him from good company and kept him aloof from the conditions which he could not attain, he seems to have taken life as a fleeting unoccupied hour, a transient and agreeable leisure.

Poets love liberty and the muse more dearly than their mistresses. The pope offered to ab-

solve Petrarch from his vows, in order that he might marry Laura. The bard replied to his holiness's obliging proposition, "I have still too many sonnets to write."

Shakspeare, that great tragic spirit, drew his serious ideas from his scorn of himself and of the human race. He doubted every thing. "Perhaps" is a word which in his lines incessantly recurs. Montaigne, on the other side of the water, repeated: *Peut-être. Que sais-je?* "Perhaps. What do I know?"

SHAKSPEARE ONE OF THE FIVE OR SIX GREAT MASTER SPIRITS.

To conclude : Shakspeare is among the five or six writers who have sufficed for the wants and the food of the mind. These parent geniuses seem to have born and suckled all the others. Homer fertilized antiquity. Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripedes, Aristophanes, Horace, Virgil, were his sons. Dante, in like manner, fathers modern Italy, from Petrarch to Tasso. Rabelais created the literature of France ; Montaigne, Lafontaine, Molière descend from him. England owes all to Shakspeare ; even to our own days he has lent his language to Byron, his dialogue to Sir Walter Scott.

People often deny the authority of these supreme masters ; they rebel against them, enumerate their defects, accuse them of tediousness, prolixity, absurdity, and bad taste, even while robbing them, and decking themselves in their spoils ; but they struggle in vain beneath their yoke. Every thing is painted with their colours,

every where they stamp their impress. They invent names and words which have enriched the general vocabulary of nations. Their sayings, their phrases, have become proverbs, their fictitious characters real persons, who have heirs and lineage. They open horizons whence rush forth floods of light; they sow ideas, the germs of a thousand others; they furnish imagination, subjects, styles, to all the arts. Their works are inexhaustible mines, or the very bowels of the human mind.

Such are geniuses of the first class. Their vastness, variety, abundance, and originality cause them to be received alone as laws, exemplars, moulds, types, of the various intellects, as there are five or six races of men, of which the others are but shades or branches. Let us beware of insulting the irregularities into which these powerful beings sometimes fall; let us not imitate the wicked Ham, nor laugh if we find one of them naked and asleep in the shade of the ark now landed on the mountains of Armenia, the sole and solitary navigator of the deep; let us respect the diluvian navigator who recommenced the creation, when the cataracts of heaven had ceased to pour. Pious sons, blessed of our sire, let us modestly cover him with our mantle!

Shakspeare during his life never thought of living after death. What now to him is my song of admiration? In admitting all suppositions, in reasoning on the truths or the errors with which the human mind is penetrated or imbued, what were to Shakspeare a renown whose echoes cannot reach him? If a christian, amidst eternal felicity, can he care for the nothingness of this world? If a deist, freed from the clouds of matter, clouds lost in the splendour of God, does he bestow one glance on the grain of sand that he has left? If an atheist—he sleeps, without breathing or awaking, the sleep called death. Nothing then is more vain than glory beyond the tomb, at least unless it has kept friendship alive, unless it has been useful to virtue, serviceable to distress, and unless it be given us to enjoy in heaven the sense of one consoling, generous, liberating idea, left by us upon earth!

PART THE THIRD.

PART THE THIRD.

LITERATURE UNDER THE FIRST TWO STUARTS AND DURING THE COMMONWEALTH.

WHAT ENGLAND OWES TO THE STUARTS.

With the name of Stuart the idea of a long tragedy is conveyed to the mind. We ask ourselves. Ought not Shakspeare to have been born in their era? No! involved in revolutionary commotions, he would not have found leisure for the development of his varied genius. Perhaps even, becoming a political man, he would have produced nothing. Facts would have consumed his life.

Great Britain owes to the race of Stuart two things, inestimable for any nation:—strength and liberty. James I in bringing the Scottish

crown to England, united the people of the island into one body, and banished foreign war from the soil. The Scotch had continental alliances; almost every time that hostilities broke out between France and England, Scotland made a powerful diversion in favour of the former. If Scotland had not been united with England in 1792, the latter could not have sustained the long war of the Revolution.

As for English liberty, the Stuarts established by attacking it—Charles I paid for it with his head, and James II with his race.

PERSONS, during the epoch in which they live take notice of mediocrity, because mediocrity is peevish, intriguing, envious, and because common things and common men make up the generality of the world: but when the past is the question, nothing obliges us to resuscitate the vulgar herd, who, undeceived as to their own merits, by the sincerity of Death, would be astounded at revival, and incapable of standing upright. Some portraits remain on the old canvass of Time when the rest of the picture is effaced; it is with such alone that we need occupy ourselves; it is sufficient to name secondary individuals, pausing only at the great figures which, at long intervals, succeed great figures. Nevertheless, it is essential to mark, as we pass, the revolutions that have taken place in the nature or the form of the human mind. I say *essential*, to speak like the learned and people of consequence; for, beyond religion and its virtues, which alone can bestow freedom, is there anything essential in this world?

The first of the four Stuarts who ascended the English throne has left works more esteemed than his memory. I will name them: one ought to mention such kings as could write on "The Apocalypse," "The True Law of Free Monarchies," and the royal gift "Basilikon Doron." If James I. had not taken such pains to establish *divine right*, and acquired the title of "His Sacred Majesty," there would perhaps have been no occasion to pass off his unfortunate son for the author of "Eikon Basilike". At any rate, the royal gift, "Basilikon Doron," deserves particular attention. It contains interesting historical matter, and exhibits James I. in a new light.

The royal gift or present, is dedicated to Henry, the eldest son of James. The King, in an Epistle to the young prince, first says to this purpose:

"I haue for the greater ease to your memorie and that ye may at the first cast vp any part that ye haue to do with, deuided this treatise in three parts. The first teacheth ye your dutie towards God as a Christian; the next your dutie in your office as a King: and the third informeth you how to behaue yourselfe in indifferent things, which of themselues are neither right nor wrong, but according as they are

rightlie or wrong vsed; and yet will serue to augment or empaire your fame & authoritie at the hands of your people."

The King then addresses the reader:—

"Amongst the rest of my secret actions which haue (vnlooked for of me) come to publick knowledge, it hath so fared with my Βασιλικόν δῶρον, directed to my eldest sonne; which I wrote for exercise of my own ingene, & instruction of him, who is appointed by God (I hope) to sit on my throne after me. For the purpose & matter thereof being only fit for a King, as teaching him his office; and the persons whome-for it was ordayned a King's heire, whose secret counsellor and faithful admonisher it must bee; I thought it no waies convenient nor comelie that it should to all be proclaymed, which to one onely appertained (& specially being a messenger between two so conjunct persons) or yet that the moulde whereupon he should frame his future behauiour, when he comes both unto the perfection of his yeeres & possession of his inheritance, should before the hand be made common to the people, the subiect of his future happie gouernment. And therefore, for the more sacred and close keeping of them, I onely permitted seauen of them to be printed, the Printer being first sworn

for secrecie: and these seauen I dispersed amongst some of my trustiest seruants to be keeped closelie by them, least in case by the iniquitie or wearing of time any of them might haue been lost, yet some of them might haue remained after me as witnesses to my sonne, both of the honest integritie of my heart, & of my fatherlie affection & naturall care towards him. But since, contrarie to my intention & expectation, as I haue alreadie said, this booke is now vented & set foorth to the publike view of the world, and consequently subject to every mans censure, as the current of his affections leades him; I am now forced, as well for resisting the malice of the children of enuie, who like waspes, suckes venome out of euery wholesome hearbe; as for the satisfaction of the godly honest sort in any thing that they may mistake therein, to publish and spred the true copies thereof."

The first part of the work, "Duties of a Christian unto God," includes some good but common-place notions. One can hardly find anything remarkable in this passage:

"And as for conscience, which I haue called the conseruer of Religion, it is nothing but the light of knowledge that God hath planted in

man, which euer watching ouer all his actions as it beareth him a joyfull testimonie when he does right, so choppeth it him with a feeling that he hath done wrong when euer he committeth any sinne. And surely, although this conscience bee a great torture to the wicked, yet it is as great a comfort to the godlie if wee will consider it rightly. For haue we not a great aduantage, that haue within our selues while wee liue heere a count booke and inuentarie of al the crimes that wee shall be accused of either at the houre of our death or the great day of judgment..... Aboue all those, my Sonne, labour to keep sound this conscience which many prattle of, but ouer few feel: especiallie be carefull to keepe it free from two diseases, wherewith it vseth to be infected; to wit Leaprosie and Superstition: the former is the mother of Atheisme, the other of Heresies. By a leaprouse conscience I meane *a cauterized conscience*, as Paul calleth it, being become senselesse of sinne, through sleeping in a carelesse securitie..... And by superstition, I meane, when one restraines himselfe to any other rule in the seruice of God than is warranted by the word, the onelie true square of God's seruice.

" Bvt as ye are clothed with two callings, so must ye be alike carefull for the discharge of

them both: that as yee are a good Christian, so ye may bee a good King, discharging your office in the points of justice & equitie: which in two sundrie waies ye must doe: the one in establishing and executing (which is the life of the law) good lawes among your people: the other by your behauiour in your owne person & with your seruants, to teach your people by your example: for people are naturally inclined to counterfaite (like Apes) their Princes maners, according to the notable saying of Plato, expressed by the poet

" ..... Componitur orbis
Regis ad exemplum, nec sic inflectere sensus
Humanos edicta valent, quàm vita regentis."

James seems to have been a family prophet, while writing these paragraphs on the death of a good king and on that of a tyrant.

" For the part of making & executing of lawes, consider first the true difference betwixt a lawfull good King & an usurping Tyrant, & ye shall the more easily vnderstand your dutie herein: for *contraria iuxta se posita magis elucescunt*. The one acknowledgeth himselfe ordained for his people, hauing received from God a burthen of gouernment whereof he must bee count-

able: the other thinketh his people ordained for him, a pray to his passions and inordinate appetites, as the fruites of his magnanimitie.... A good King (after a happie and famous Reigne) dieth in peace, lamented by his Subjects and admired by his neighbours, and leauing a reuerend renowne behinde him in earth, obtaineth the crowne of eternall felicitie in heauen. And although some of them (which falleth not verie rarely) may bee cut off by the reason of some vnnaturall subjects, yet liveth their fame after them, & some notable plague faileth neuer to ouer-take the committers in this life, besides their infamie to all posterities hereafter, where by the contrarie a Tyrannes miserable & infamous life armeth in end his owne subjects to become his burreaux; and although that rebellion be euer vnlawfull on their part, yet is the world so wearied of him, that his fall is little meaned by the rest of his subjects, and but smyled at by his neighbours. And besides the infamous memorie he leaueth behinde him here, and the endles paine hee sustaineth hereafter, it oft falleth out that the committers not onely escape vnpunished, but farther, the fact will remaine as allowed by the law in diuers ages thereafter.

" It is easie then for you (my Sonne) to make choyse of one of these two sortes of rules by

following the way of vertue to establish your standing; yea, in case ye fell in the high way, yet should it be with the honourable report and just regrate of all honest men."

In treating of such crimes as ought not to be pardoned, James says to his son and heir:—

"Sen yee are the lawfull magistrate, suffer not both your Princes and your Parents to be dishonoured by any; especially sith the example also toucheth your selfe, in leauing thereby to your successors the measure of that which they shall mette out again to you in your like behalfe..... And as yee are come of as honourable Predecessoures as anie Prince liuing, represse the insolence of such as vnder pretence to taxe a vice in the person, seekes craftilie to staine the race, and to steale the affection of the people from their posteritie. For howe can they loue you, that hated them whome-of ye are come? Where-fore destroy men innocent young sucking Wolues and Foxes, but for the hatred they beare to their race? and why will a coult of a Courser of Naples giue a greater price in a market than an Asse-colt but for loue of the race? It is therefore a thing monstrous to see a man loue the childe, & hate the Parentes:

as, on the other parte, the infaming & making odious of the parent is the readiest way to bring the sonne in contempt. And for conclusion of this point, I may also alledge my owne experience. For besides the judgements of God, that with my eyes I haue seene fall upon all them that were chief traitours to my parents, I may justly affirme, I neuer found yet a constant byding by me in all my straits by any that were of perfete age in my parentes dayes, but only by such as constantly bode by them. I meane specially by them that served the Queene my mother: for so that I discharge my conscience to you, my Sonne, in reuealing to you the trueth, I care not what any traitour or treason-allower thinke of it."

This energetic address gives us to understand that James had been calumniated when it was pretended that he was indifferent to the fate of his mother. The sentiments had the more merit as he was not King of England when he wrote them. In Scotland the enemies of Mary Stuart surrounded him, and Elizabeth, whose throne he expected, still lived.

The following paragraph gives an idea of the state of Scotland at that period.

" Heere nowe speaking of oppressours and of

justice, the people leadeth mee to speake of Hie-lande and Bordour oppressions. As for the Hie-lands, I shortly comprehend them all in two sortes of people: the one that dwelleth in our maine land, that are barbarians for the most parte, and yet mixed with some shewe of ciuilitie: the other that dwelleth in the Iles, and are all vtterly barbarous, without any sort or shewe of ciuilitie. For the first sorte, put straitely to execution the lawes made already by mee against the Ouer-lords and the chiefs of their Clannes, and it will be no difficultie to danton them. As for the other sort, follow forth the course that I have intended, in planting colonies among them of answerable In-lande subiects, that within short time may reforme and ciuilize the best inclined among them: rooting out or transporting the barbarous and stubborne sort, and planting ciuility in their rooms.

"But as for the Bourdours, because I knowe if yee enjoye not this whole Ile, according to God's right and youre lineall discent, ye will neuer get leaue to brook this north and barrenest parte thereof, not your owne head whereon the crowne shoulde stande: I neede not in that case trouble you with them: for then they will bee the middest of the Ile, and so as easily ruled as any part thereof.

"The reformation of religion in Scotland being extraordinarily wrought by God.....and not proceeding from the Princes order, as it did in our neighbour country of England, as likewise in Denmarke and sundry partes of Germanie; some fierie spirited men in the ministerie gotte such a guyding of the people at that time of confusion, as finding the gust of government sweete, they begouth to fantasie to themselues a Democraticke forme of gouernment: and hauing, (by the iniquitie of time) bin ouerwell baited vpon the wracke, first of my Grandmother, and next of my owne Mother, and after vsurping the liberty of the time in my long minoritie, settled themselues so fast vppon that imagined Democracie as they fed themselues with the hope to become *Tribuni plebis.*"

What James I. here says of the Puritan faction explains the theory of divine right which he caused to be so lamentably upheld in the sequel. Having seen nothing but trouble and desolation, in consequence of the principle of the sovereignty of the people, he took refuge in his right divine, not feeling sufficiently secure in the principle of hereditary monarchy.

James treats of the nobility: he examines its qualities and its defects. The King's notion

relative to the great offices of state is very judicious. With regard to the working classes, James outsteps the ideas of his age; he wished to give and proclaim to them full liberty for intercourse with strangers, and foreign commerce.

Treating of the marriage of princes, James recommends purity of life to his son. Politic advice and striking truth are blended in these moral instructions.

"Have yee respect my sonne to the three speciall causes in youre mariage, which flowe from the first institution thereof, *et cætera omnia adjicientur vobis.* And therefore I would rathest have you to marie one that were fully of youre owne religion; her ranke and other qualities being agree-able to your estate. For although that to my great regrate the number of any Princes of power, profesing our Religion, be but very small; and therefore this aduice seems to be the more straite and difficile, yet yee have deeplie to weigh and consider vpon these doubts: how yee and your wife can be of one flesh and keep vnitie betwix you, being members of two opposite churches: disagreement in religion bringeth euer with it disagreement in manners; and the dissention betwixt your Preachers and hers will

breede and foster a dissention among your subjects, taking their example from your familie; besides the peril of the euil education of your children. Neither pride you that yee will be able to frame and make her as yee please: that deceaved *Salomon* the wisest King that euer was: the grace of Perseuerance not beeing a flowre that groweth in our garden."

If Charles I. had followed the advice which James gave to Henry, he might have spared himself many misfortunes. For the rest, the horror with which the King of Scotland speaks of certain depravities, makes me believe that upon this point too he has been misjudged. One soldier-like word from our Henri IV, cannot constitute an historical authority; we must only take that word for a *Ventre-saint-gris*. The yielding one's self to favourites proves weakness, but does not necessarily imply corruption of heart. When men give themselves up to shameful vices, they conceal them; but they cannot, with any degree of assurance, praise the opposite virtues. A veil of words would ill conceal a blushing brow.

The third part of Basilicon Doron, the deportment of Kings in common and indifferent matters, is amusing from its simplicity. James

instructs his son to be attentive to the graces and etiquettes of the table. Henry was forbidden to be either dainty or a glutton; all his food was to be prepared "without composition or sauces, which are more like medecines then meat. The eating of them was counted amongst the ancient Romans a filthie vice of delicacie." Henry was "speciallie to beware of drunkennesse, because it is one of those vices that increaseth with age," and expires but with life.

"In the forme of your meat-eating, be neither vnciuill, like a grosse Cynicke; nor affectatlie mignarde, like a daintee dame; but eat in a manlie, round, and honest fashion.... Be also moderate in your sleepe.... Take no heede to anie of your dreames: for that errour proceedeth of ignorance and is vnwoorthie of a Christian.... Be also moderate in your raiment; neither ouer superfluous, like a deboshed waister, nor yet ouer base, like a miserable wretch; not artificiallie trimmed and decked like a Courtizane, nor ouersluggishly clothed, like a country-clowne; not ouer lightly like a Candie-souldier, or a vaine young Courtier, nor yet ouer grauelie, like a Minister.... But speciallie eschewe to be effæminate in your cloathes, in perfuming, preening, or such like: and faile neuer in time

of warres to be gaillardest and brauest both in cloathes and countenance. And make not a foole of yoursselfe in disguysing or wearing long haire or nailes, which are but excrements of nature."

With regard to games and exercises, James wishes his son to choose among them, but recommends running, leaping, wrastling, fencing, daun-cing, and playing at the caitche or tennise, archery, paille maille, and such like other faire and pleasant field games. And the honourablest and most commendable games that yee can vse are on horse-backe; for it becommeth a Prince best of any man to be a faire and good horseman. Vse therefore to ride and danton great and courageous horses: that I may say of you as *Philip* said of great *Alexander*, his sonne Μακεδονια υσε χωριε

James also sanctions hunting, but with hounds, which he thinks the noblest and most proper kind for a prince. On this point he refers his son to Xenophon—" an olde and famous writer, who had no minde of flattering you or me in this purpose."

" In your language be plaine, honest, naturall, comelie, cleane, short, and sentencious; eschew-

ing both the extremities, as well in not vsing any rusticall corrupt leide, as booke-language, and Pen and Inkhorne tearmes: and least of all mignard and effæminate termes.... If your engine spurre you to write any workes eyther in verse or prose, I cannot but alowe you to practise it: but take no longsome workes in hande, for distracting you from your calling. If yee would write worthely, choose subjects worthie of you, that be not full of vanity but of vertue: eschewing obscurity, and delighting euer to be plaine and sensible. And if yee write in verse, remember that it is not the principall part of a poem to rime right and flowe well with many pretty wordes: but the chief commendation of a poeme is that when the verse shall bee shaken sundry in prose, it shall bee found so ritch in quicke inuentions and poeticke floures, and in faire and pertinent comparisons: as shall retain the lustre of a poeme, although in prose. And I would also aduise you to write in your own language: for there is nothing left to bee saide in Greeke and Latine already; and ynewe of poor schollers would match you in these languages; and besides that, it best becommeth a King to purifie and make famous his owne tongue, wherein he may goe before all his subjectes, as it setteth him well to doe in all honest and lawful things."

These last counsels are curious. The author-king, who expressed himself so emphatically in Parliament, here evinces both taste and moderation. This work concludes with a grand prospect. James believes that, sooner or later, the union of Scotland and England will form one mighty empire.

I have expatiated the more largely on the Royal Gift, because it is almost unknown at the present day, or known only from one of those judgments composed for the use of those who read nothing, by those who have read nothing. Voltaire, who skimmed everything without giving himself time to study, has thrown on the world a multitude of those party opinions which are adopted by ignorance and insolence. If sometimes the author of the *Essai sur les Mœurs* judges aright, it is by guess. Thus, from age to age, evident falsehoods are believed and repeated as articles of faith; they acquire in time a kind of truth and authenticity which nothing can destroy.

Henry, it is with pain that I write the name! Henry, to whom the Basilicon Doron is addressed, died at the age of eighteen; had he lived, Charles I. would not have reigned. The Revolutions of 1649 and of 1688 would not have taken place; our revolution would not

have had the same consequences; without the precedent of Charles's sentence, the idea of sending Louis XVI. to the block would not have occurred to any one in France. The world would have been changed.

These reflections, which present themselves on occasion of every historical catastrophe, are vain. There is always a moment in the annals of nations in which, if such or such a thing had not happened, if such or such a man had been or had not been dead, if such or such a measure had been taken, or such or such a fault not committed, that which followed could not have happened. But God decrees that men should be born with dispositions suited to the events which they are to bring about. Louis XVI. had a hundred opportunities of escape; he did not escape, simply because he was Louis XVI. It is childish then to lament accidents which produce what they are destined to produce. At each step in life, a thousand different distances, a thousand future chances, are opening on us, though we can see but one horizon, and rush forward to one futurity.

JAMES I. put to death the famous Sir Walter Raleigh, whose Universal History is still read for Sir Walter's own sake. If there are books which keep alive the names of the authors, there are authors whose names keep alive their books.

Cowley, in the order of poets, comes immediately after Shakspeare, though he was born later than Milton. A royalist in his opinions, he wrote for the theatres, and composed poems, satires, and elegies. He abounds in traits of wit. His versification is said to want harmony; his style, though often far-fetched, is nevertheless more natural, and more correct than that of his predecessors.

Cowley attacks us. From Surrey to Byron, there is scarcely an English author who has not insulted the name, the character, the genius of the French. With admirable impartiality and self-denial, we submit to this outrage; humbly confessing our inferiority, we celebrate,

with sound of trumpet, the excellence of all the authors across the Channel, born or to be born, great or small, male or female!

In his poem on the Civil War, Cowley says:

> It was not so when Edward proved his cause
> By a sword stronger than the Salic laws,
> ..... when the French did fight
> With women's hearts against the women's right.

Our King John, Charny, Ribeaumont, Beaumanoir, the thirty Bretons, Duguesclin, Clisson, and a hundred thousand others, had women's hearts!

Of all the men who have shed lustre on Great Britain, he who most attracts my regard, is Lord Falkland. I have wished, a hundred times, to have been this accomplished model of intelligence, generosity, and independence, and never to have appeared on earth in my own form or by my own name. Endowed with a three-fold genius for literature, arms, and policy; constant to the muses, even beneath the tent, and to liberty, in a palace; devoted to an unfortunate monarch, without being blind to his faults, Falkland has left a memory in which melancholy blends with admiration. The verses which Cowley addressed to him, on his return from a military expedition, are noble and true: The

poet begins by enumerating the virtues and talents of his hero; then adds:

> Such is the man whom we require, the same
> We lent the North, untouched as is his fame;
> He is too good for war, and ought to be
> As far from danger as from fear he's free.
> Those men alone .....
> Whose valour is the only art they know,
> Were for sad war and bloody battles born,
> Let them the state defend, and he adorn!

Fruitless wish! Life, in the midst of his country's woes, became the lot of this friend to the muses. His grief betrayed itself in the carelessness of his attire. On the morning of the first battle of Naseby, his intention of dying was guessed by his change of habit; he arrayed himself as if for a day of rejoicing, and asked for clean linen, saying, with a smile, "I do not wish my body to be buried in soiled garments. I foresee great misfortunes, but I shall be out of them before the day is over." Placing himself in the front rank of Lord Byron's regiment, a ball, winged by that liberty which he adored, enfranchised him from the oaths of honour to which he was a slave.

There remain some speeches and verses by Falkland, Secretary of State to Charles I.: he aided Clarendon to revise the Royal Procla-

mations, and Chillingworth in his History of Protestantism.

The Bible, partly translated in the reign of Henry VIII., was re-translated under James I. by forty-seven scholars. This last translation is a masterpiece. The authors of that immense undertaking did for the English language what Luther did for the German, and the writers of Louis the Thirteenth's time for French. They established the language.

POLITICAL WRITINGS UNDER CHARLES I. AND CROMWELL.

To look for literature in times of commotion, is to ask shelter in the peaceful valleys which poets place on the sea-shore; but were we led by some good Genius to these retreats, other spirits would thrust us into the midst of the tempest and the waves. Politics ascend the tripod, transformed into a Sibyl. Pamphlets, libels, and satirical poems abound; impregnated with hate, and written in the blood of factions. The civil wars of England gave birth to deplorable productions.

One of those fanatics whom Butler held up to ridicule, exclaims, in "An alarm to all Flesh," "Howle, howle, bawl and roar, ye lustful, cursing, swearing, drunken, lewd, superstitious, develish, sensual, earthly inhabitants of the whole earth! Bow, bow, you most surly trees, and lofty oaks! ye tall cedars and low shrubs,

cry out aloud! hear, hear, ye proud waves, and boisterous seas! also, listen ye uncircumcised, stiff necked, and mad-raging bubbles, who even hate to be reformed."

The poets equalled the orators.

> Dear friend, *J. C.*, with true unfeigned love
> I thee salute . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . dear friend, a member jointly knit
> To all in Christ, in heavenly places sit,
> And there to friends no stranger would I be.
> . . . . . .
> For truly, friend, I dearly love, and own
> All travelling souls, who truly sigh and groan
> For the adoption which sets free from sin, &c. &c."

Cromwell scarcely rose above this style of eloquence, as we may judge by his obscure speeches and rambling letters. His poetry lay in facts and in his sword. He was a poet while gazing on Charles I. in his coffin. His muse was the female, who, by his own account, appeared to him in his childhood, and promised him royalty.

THE French Revolution has also produced writers who have beheld Liberty in Religion; but here our superiority is manifest. It is in the fields of the cross that the Abbé de Lamennais has acquired so tender an interest for human nature, for the poor and suffering industrious classes of society; it was in wandering with Christ upon the highways and beholding the little ones assembled at the feet of the Saviour of the world that he has found again the poetry of the Gospel. Might we not call the following picture a detached parable from the sermon on the Mount?

"It was a wintry night; the wind blew, the snow whitened the roofs;

"Beneath one of these roofs in a small room were seated at work a woman with silvery hair, and a young girl:

"And from time to time, the old woman

warmed her wan hands at a little stove. A clay lamp lighted this poor abode, and one of the rays thereof died away on an image of the Virgin, hung against the wall.

" And the young maid, raising her eyes, looked for a while in silence on the woman with silvery hair; then she said: Mother, you have not been always thus destitute.

" And there was inexpressible sweetness and tenderness in her voice.

" And the woman with silver hair replied: My child, God is our master; whatsoever he doth is right.

" Having said these words, she was silent for a short time, and then continued:

" When I lost your father it was a grief which I thought without solace; true you were left to me, yet then I could think only of one thing.

" Since then I have thought that, had he lived to see us in this distress, his heart would have broken; and I am satisfied that God has dealt kindly with him.

" The maiden answered no, but bent her head, and a few tears, which she strove to hide, fell on the linen she held in her hands.

" The mother added: God has been merciful unto him, and unto us also. What have we wanted while others want all things?

" It is true we must accustom ourselves to live on little, and that little earned by our labour; but doth not that little suffice? and were not all mankind from the beginning doomed to live by toil?

" God in his bounty has given us each day our daily bread; and how many have it not! He hath given us a shelter; and how many know not where to lay their heads!

" My child, he hath given me thee; of what then should I complain?

" At these words the maid's heart was much moved; she threw herself at the knees of her mother, took her hands, kissed them, and leant weeping on her parent's breast.

" And the mother, striving to raise her voice, said: My child, happiness is not in possessing much, but in loving and hoping much.

" Our hope is not here below nor our love either, or if they be it is but for a time.

" Next to God thou art all to me in this world; but this world vanisheth like a dream, and that is why my love raiseth itself with thee unto another world.

" While I carried thee beneath my heart, I prayed one day, with great fervour, to the Virgin Mary; and she appeared to me in my sleep, and methought that, with a heavenly smile, she presented me with a child.

"And I took the infant she gave me, and while I held it in my arms the Virgin Mother placed on its head a crown of white roses.

"A few months afterwards thou wert born; and that sweet vision was ever before mine eyes.

"So saying, the woman with silvery hair trembled and pressed her daughter to her heart.

"A little while afterwards a holy man beheld two forms of light ascend towards heaven; a host of angels accompanied them, and the air resounded with songs of joy."

We live (as in the days of Cromwell) in an age of reform; if in his time, more morality and conviction was remarked in the public mind, in ours may be observed more urbanity and gentleness. Puritanical sentiments were very far from that harmony and that peace which the religious philosophy of M. Ballanche introduces into christianity.

KILLING NO MURDER. LOCKE. HOBBES. DENHAM. HARINGTON. HARVEY. SIEYES. MIRABEAU. BENJAMIN CONSTANT. CARREL.

THE most celebrated pamphlet of this era was "Killing no Murder." Its author, the republican Colonel Titus, in an ironical dedication, entreated *His Highness*, Oliver Cromwell, to die for the happiness and deliverance of the English. After this publication the Protector was never seen to smile: he felt himself abandoned by the Revolutionary spirit to which he owed his greatness. The Revolution, which chose him as a guide, would not endure him as a master. The mission of Cromwell was fulfilled. His age and nation had no more need of him. Time pauses not to admire glory, but makes it useful and passes on.

I have read (perhaps in Gui Patin) one curious fact, which I believe has not been previously remarked. The doctor observes that "Killing no Murder" was originally written in French, by a gentleman of Burgundy.

Here we have Locke as a poet. He wrote

very bad verses in honour of Cromwell. Waller had composed some very good ones.

The crouching flattery which survives the object of its adulation is but the excuse of an infirm conscience, exalting a master who is no more, to justify past admiration and servility. Cromwell betrayed that Liberty from which he sprang. If Success is to be regarded as Innocence, if, misleading even posterity, Success should become the accomplice of whomsoever has triumphed, where would be right and justice? where would sacrifices find their reward? Good and evil being but relative, all morality would be effaced from all human actions.

On the other hand, who would defend sacred independence and the cause of the weak against the strong, if courage, exposed to the vengeance and malice of the Present, were again exposed to the slanders and the baseness of the Future? Misfortune, bereft of voice, would lose even the organ of complaint, and those two great advocates of the oppressed, Probity and Genius.

Hobbes, a royalist, in his hatred of popular opinions, ran into an opposite extreme; he traced all things to force and necessity, reducing justice to one of the functions of power and not representing it as resulting from a moral sense. He did not perceive that democracy had as great a right as unity to set out from that same princi-

ple. Society which naturally tended towards the popular establishment did not retrograde with the system of Hobbes, notwithstanding the excesses of the English Revolution; it was only checked in its progress by Louis XIV, who barred its way by his glory. Hobbes inculcated scepticism, as did our philosophers of the eighteenth century, with an imperious tone of dogmatical haughtiness. He wished to be thought a firm believer in unbelief, and preached doubt like an Inquisitor. His style is energetic, and his Thucydides has been too much decried. This strong mind, (*esprit fort*) this free-thinker, was the weakest of men; he trembled at the thought of the tomb. Nature supported him to the age of ninety-two, and delivered him fainting into the arms of death, as a swooning convict is carried to the fatal block.

Sir John Denham is still slightly remembered for his descriptive poem of "Cooper's Hill." He was a royalist, and the agent in London of the correspondence between Charles the First and his Queen. Cowley held the same office in Paris: thus did the Muses render service to conjugal tenderness and misfortune.

Harington's "Oceana" is a repetition of Sir Thomas More's Utopia. Where is a perfect government to be found? In Utopia —*no where*— as the name implies.

Harvey described his great discovery of the circulation of the blood. No physician in Europe, having attained the age of forty, would adopt the doctrine of Harvey; he himself lost his practice in London, because he had discovered an important truth. Harvey was encouraged by Charles the First and remained faithful to him. Servetus, burnt in effigy by the catholics and in person by Calvin, had pointed out the circulation of the blood in the lungs. This age treated a man of genius as a vulgar heretic, whom another heretic conducted to the stake.

For the rest, as to the purely political English pamphlets, even when not infected by the theological jargon of the time, (which was a rare case) they remain at an immense distance behind our modern investigations. If we except Milton, no writer during the Revolution of 1649 can approach Sieyes, Mirabeau; Benjamin Constant, still less Carrel. This last, close, firm, able and logical writer, has in his manner something of the positive eloquence of facts; his deep and grave style may be compared with history recorded by monuments.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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